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THE  
HEIRESS OF HAUGHTON;  
OR,  
THE MOTHER'S SECRET.

BY  
THE AUTHOR OF  
"EMILIA WYNDHAM," "TWO OLD MEN'S TALES," &c.

———— As gentle  
As zephyrs, blowing below the violet,  
Not wagging his sweet head——  
CYMBELINE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.  
VOL. II.

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## THE HEIRESS OF HAUGHTON.

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Howe'er it be, it seems to me  
'Tis only noble to be good.  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.

TENNYSON.

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I WILL now pass over a few years ; and, bringing my party together, introduce them to you as I became first acquainted with them all, in the year 18—.

Sir John Faulconer, of Drystoke, the father of Albert, whom I have introduced to you, at

the opening of this story, as the pride of Eton School, lived at a distance of about fifteen miles from Haughton-Hall. His wife, Lady Faulconer, was still living, and they had one son and two daughters.

The family at Haughton-Hall had led so unsociable a life since William Aubrey and Lady Emma took possession of it, that only distant and formal visits had been exchanged with the inhabitants of Drystoke; but, Lady Faulconer, ever desirous to improve her stock of acquaintance in the right direction, had let no opportunity escape for cultivating the acquaintance, and we may have observed Sir John Faulconer's carriage was by Nurse remarked as among those that followed her master's funeral.

Noted by Nurse for two reasons—first, that she thought it a long way to come, and, therefore, a particular compliment for the carriage to be there; and, secondly, because the Faulconers—for no reason that I could ever exactly discover, to account for the fact—were certainly very much considered in the neigh-

bourhood. The acquaintance between the families would, however, in all probability have continued upon the old languishing terms, if it had not been for an event which took place after William Aubrey's death, and which necessarily drew them into a closer intimacy.

This was nothing less than the marriage of Lord Ulick, one of Lady Emma's brothers, with a younger sister of Lady Faulconer's.

We have heard nothing of the Marchioness of Hurstmonceaux, or of Lady Emma's brothers and sisters, since her marriage. We left them all tolerably easy and comfortable, through William Aubrey's assistance, and as they had no further concern with the story, no more was related about them.

The situation of the family had been considerably altered since then.

The Marquis was dead, and the title and estate had descended to the eldest son, who was so nearly an idiot, that his affairs were put into the care of Chancery; and, except a moderate allowance to the Marchioness Dow-

ger, and for the maintenance and establishment of the brothers and sisters, nothing was to be obtained from that quarter.

The Marchioness, therefore, had recourse to the usual expedient for making a limited income answer the demands of fashionable necessities, by going abroad, and had been for five or six years settled with her daughters at Florence.—The sons had been provided for in various ways, by the exertions of William Aubrey and other friends. Lord Ulick had followed his elder brother Algernon's profession, and had entered the Navy. This, indeed, had been done some years before Lady Emma's marriage; so that, with the interest he enjoyed, and a very competent portion of professional merits, he was now captain and commander;—or rather, commander, and, by courtesy, captain of a nice little vessel.

Captain Lord Ulick Sidney came to Portsmouth to be paid off.—Lady Faulconer was with her children at Southsea. She was a woman that never lost an opportunity or overlooked



an advantage;—but she was not without her good points, any more than the rest of the world.

She took care first of herself,—then of those nearest and dearest; and when, after having done this, anything in the way of advantage remained to be bestowed, why then she did not, as many selfish people do,—let it fall neglected to the ground, but she began to look about, to discover whom next she could profit. She was the most active person in forwarding schemes for the interest of every one, according to these degrees of precedence that I ever met with in my life,—and yet, everybody called her selfish, and nobody liked her.

Well, then, her daughters being too young for such things to be thought of; and a couple of months at a watering place, so near a garrison town and sea-port, like Portsmouth, being an advantage not to be lightly thrown away, Lady Faulconer invited one of her younger sisters to come and pass the time with

her. There were a good many of these sisters, younger and older, who had lived at Bath, since the death of their father, General Boycott, upon the pensions from government, and the slender remains of the General's fortune. In vain, however, had they lived there, I am sorry to say, so far at least as the main object, settling in the world, was concerned;—and in spite of all that Lady Faulconer (when she had time to think about them) could do,—in sending them some of her own half-worn fine dresses, bonnets, and cloaks, and lending them her numbers of the *Petit Courrier des Dames*, when she had done with them—the Misses Boycott remained upon hand.

Therefore, as her own girls were at present too young for her to be thinking of such things as regarded them, Lady Faulconer, according to her usual system of social economy, began to consider who had best profit by the opportunity which it would be a shame and a sin to waste; and after some weighing and considering, whether it were best to endeavour

to get the oldest and ugliest off first—or to try the far better chance with a younger and a prettier one — she decided, that the probabilities of effecting the first were so small as really not to be worth striving for; and finally, in spite of the murmurs of the rest of the sisterhood, invited the youngest and prettiest, Lucy,—really a very pretty girl,—to join her. Captain Lord Ulick Sidney, having nothing much else to do, and being in want of amusement, wandered often to Southsea, and here he fell into acquaintance with Lady Faulconer; and the weather being fine, and he having plenty of leisure, as the saying is, he, in no very long time, fell in love with Miss Lucy Boycott. The progress from an idle inclination, to a regular passion, being completed by the well directed offices of Lady Faulconer, who was a perfect adept in such affairs, as well as in sundry others, the successful conduct of which requires that peculiar knowledge of the world, which consists in a very just appreciation of human weaknesses.

To help a love affair over that gulph, deep and wide, which lies between a passion and a proposal, was, indeed, the triumph of skill, upon which she piqued herself.—She had succeeded in her own case ! she had succeeded in that of many others, and an unwary seaman, like Lord Ulick, was not a very difficult personage to manage.

It is true, he had little or nothing but his commission, and Miss Lucy had little or nothing but her face ; but he was a nobleman's son—his sister was rich beyond calculation, he was lively and good-humoured ; Lucy was accustomed to make a little go a great way ;—the connection would be an advantage to all. Sir John Faulconer would do something, if Lady Emma would do something—so the marriage was brought to bear.—For Sir John Faulconer, with his usual careless good nature, and Lady Emma, with her usual generosity, lent their aid to make up a tolerable income, so the young people were married, and were as happy as other young people of their

sort are, with a little establishment of their own.—There was enough for the present, and no disposition to look anxiously forward to the future.—“Guarda e passa,” however, for with them, except so far as this connection brought the two families at Haughton Hall and Drystoke, into closer connection, we have little to do.

In fact, it was this closer intimacy with Haughton Hall, which was the part of the affair, to which Lady Faulconer looked as her own share of the good to arise from her exertions and the allowance she had permitted, rather than persuaded, Sir John Faulconer to grant,—for he, whatever his other qualities, good or bad, might be, was liberal to a fault in all that regarded money.

Lady Faulconer was provident and calculating; she settled it with herself, that there was nothing but advantage to be reaped from a family connection with Haughton Hall; for to be allied, even somewhat remotely, with great wealth is, as times go, a very positive advan-

tage. Moreover, Lady Emma Aubrey led so recluse a life, that one, who had a certain sort of right to intimacy, would profit by such advantages almost without competition. There was no rival to be dreaded. Mrs. Birchell was gone,—and Lady Faulconer trusted, and not without reason, to her own *savoir faire*, to enable her to insinuate herself into the place left vacant—of bosom friend and counsellor.

Looming in the distance, were flattering visions of immense possible contingencies,—but whether or not such visions were destined to assume a more substantial form, the advantages to result from the friendly intercourse, which was thus to be established, were certain.

It was three or four years after the death of William Aubrey, that I was first made acquainted with the group, in which I, since that time, have taken so much interest.

Imogene's birth-day was approaching, and was to be kept,—as, by the care of Mr. Glenroy, every one of the young heiress's birth-days had been kept, since she came into possession—

by a feast, given to the dependants, and specially to the inhabitants of Armidale.

The state of the population was already very much ameliorated; and Mr. Glenroy, with a just perception of the duties he owed to them, and to her on whom they would, in course of time, descend, had persevered in the plan which you have seen he adopted from the first. He made the woman-child, young as she was, understand and participate, as far as possible, in all his views for the improvement of those dependent upon her.

These were days before the advancement of the morals and condition of our manufacturing classes was becoming the object of general interest and attention, as is—thank God for it!—the case in our time. The efforts of the proprietors of the Lanark Mills, were, I believe, the first movement in this blessed course, and they were for many years little attended to, and little imitated upon our side the Cheviot. In Scotland, however, among the wise and benevolent, they excited

much attention, and Mr. Glenroy was quite one to estimate the full value of the example, and deeply to feel the responsibility which lay upon one, entrusted with a charge of a somewhat similar nature—to endeavour at imitating the good work, which was there being carried out.

The enthusiasm in the cause which he was enabled to awaken in the child's mind, was a rich reward for all his exertions. Her's was, as you will have seen, one of those happy natures which responds to every thing which is kind, compassionate, and good. A sense of justice the most uncompromising was the basis of a character, whose very heart was made up of tenderest pity for suffering, united to a spirit and activity in endeavouring to relieve it, with which tempers so soft and sympathising, are not always gifted.

The child could never be made to understand why conditions should be so unequally cast.—She seemed ashamed of the possession of her own great wealth, and of all the luxury which surrounded her, and painfully contrasted it



with the condition of those inhabitants of that black, dreary Armidale, which to her, possessing such lively enthusiasm for natural beauty, appeared so gloomy and dreary a wilderness. In her to whom the sight of a knot of primroses under the bursting green of a hawthorn hedge, dripping with the dew of a May morning, was rapture—these dark and barren hills—these stunted bushes, perishing in the sooty fumes which defiled the air—these long, long rows of blackened houses, unrelieved by the slightest approach to the picturesque—the wretched and barren aspect of all things, excited a mingled feeling of intense compassion and repulsive horror.

She would have hated going there, would have shunned the sight so distressing to her, had not Mr. Glenroy laid hold of that young mind, and taken the way to guide and bend it in the proper direction. He spoke to this child from the first, as if she had been no longer a child. He appealed to that sense of duty and natural justice, which lies, I believe,

in all human hearts, however much it may be overlaid or distorted,—but which was in her so remarkably strong. He taught her that the difference in ranks and conditions was a dispensation of God, the reasons of which she was too young in the least to comprehend—but that one thing she could understand, as well as any grown person, and that was, that God expected every one to do their duty in the state of life to which it had pleased him to call them. He told her that she was not put there merely to enjoy the fine things with which she was surrounded, but to do good. That to every one, a task in which pain and difficulty had a share was allotted;—that if the children of Armidale had to bear many hardships, pains, and privations, she had her share apportioned, too. And that her share was the pain of witnessing distress, that she might relieve it.—That it was her duty to leave—and very frequently, too—those sweet walks and shrubberies, in which she loved to wander and play with Eugene, in order to pass her time in

these smoky, dirty places she hated, in company with himself or Mr. Elmsley (of whom more hereafter), not only that she might know herself what want, and misery, and dirt, and naughtiness were, and how best to relieve them, but because it did these people a great deal of good, merely to see her come. The reason of much of this she might be too young to understand, but she must take it on trust from him, who was so much older, and had seen so much more than herself, and she must do it

You do not think such simple reasoning was thrown away upon the child. The heart of Mr. Glenroy throbbed with pleasure, and his countenance quite glowed, when he marked the readiness, the warmth approaching to enthusiasm, with which the little creature responded to every word.

But her greatest joy was the annual school-feast—for the annual school-feast was given at Haughton Hall, in a large and beautiful meadow at the foot of the hill, round which the

noble woods came feathering down; and above which the noble mansion, and its rich plantations, towered. It was crossed by a shallow, pebbly trout stream, which emptied itself into the lake which, at one end, terminated the meadow.

Here her love of beauty, all her imaginations, and rich childish fancies, and all her kind and generous sympathies were gratified at once. She was queen of the day; but it was no vain pride that made her eyes so bright, the colour of her cheek so fair, and her step so gladsome and elastic. Not one touch of pride or vanity ever stained that honest heart. No, it was simply the generous delight in being the conscious spring of all this happiness—that gave her such intense pleasure. If the feeling were partial and blameworthy, that was the extent of her imperfections.

But enough of this general description; I am now about to relate my own adventures, feelings, and observations, upon occasion of the first visit I made to Haughton Hall.

Albert Faulconer, and I, John Lenham, happened to be at a preparatory school together, which we had both quitted about two years before, for Eton.

I do not think there would have been any very strong liking, upon Albert's side, for the slow, sapping Lenham, if it had not been for the violent fancy I took to him. I was a boy of few affections, excessively fastidious myself; though under an appearance so quiet and slow, that few guessed the nicety, shall I call it, of my perceptions, or the very great difficulty I found in liking anybody at all. It seemed as if I possessed a sort of perverse moral microscope in my mind, and that defects were magnified by it, till slight blemishes assumed the aspect of insufferable deformities.

Everybody seemed to have such *big* faults. Pity, you will say, the microscope was not turned inwards—perhaps it might be so at times, for I do not think I liked myself much better than I liked other people. One or two exceptions, however, to this general disgust, I found;

and Albert Faulconer was the most distinguished of them. My devotion to him was in proportion to its exclusiveness. No boy with an atom of heart could resist such partiality; and coming, as it did, from the sullen, cold, reserved Lenham, he was probably the more flattered, as well as touched;—briefly, I was admitted among his friends, frequently invited to visit him at his father's house, and this particular summer had been asked to spend the Midsummer holidays with him, and accompany the party from Drystoke to the fête at Haughton Hall.

I was but too happy to accept the invitation. I loved to be with Albert, better than any other enjoyment in the world. Drystoke, his father's place, I delighted in; for my father, though a very wealthy man, was a Bristol merchant, and we passed much of our time in that city, or its very near neighbourhood, which, in spite of its beauty, was too much be-built and be-peopled for my taste. I always received a most cordial welcome from

Lady Faulconer, who seemed never better pleased than when she saw her eldest daughter and myself engaged at chess together—the only game I much affected. I thought it very good natured of Miss Faulconer to bore herself in order to amuse me, and very polite of her mother to encourage her so to do.

In short, I was always happy at the Faulconers, where I met with all sort of kind attentions.

## CHAPTER II.

She, Dryad like, shall wear  
Alternate leaf and acorn fall  
In wreath about her hair.

TENNYSON.

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I WAS a quiet-tempered boy, as I said, but I had my own amusement, and one of the greatest was, the observing the play of the characters about me ;—which play was, in truth, exposed to my observation, in a manner so careless, that with, I hope, the greatest abhorrence for anything like an improper curiosity, it was impossible for me to avoid seeing a great deal of what was going on.

The family at Drystoke, consisted, as I think



I have said, of Sir John and Lady Faulconer, one son, and two daughters. The eldest daughter, Charlotte, being the eldest of the family, and her sister Laura, the youngest; my friend Albert coming between them.

Sir John Faulconer was a gay, careless-tempered man of the world, or rather had been a man of the world, for he now lived almost entirely at Drystoke, spending his time in visiting, dawdling, and hunting, and more than enough of his money,—which, go where he would, or do what he would, he always continued to do.

Of Lady Faulconer I have already spoken; of Charlotte, the eldest daughter, I will only say, that she was more sensible than sweet-tempered; of Laura, the youngest, that she was extremely pretty; for the rest, they shall speak for themselves. Lord and Lady Ulick Sidney, were at this time, staying at Drystoke, and their proceedings, and Lady Faulconer's proceedings, with regard to them, were amusing enough.

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I was a studious boy, and a devourer of books, of all descriptions; and, in the old deserted library at Drystoke, I found plenty of food for my curiosity; I loved to rummage among the old volumes, and Lady Faulconer allowed me to bring into the drawing-room, any that I wished regularly to peruse, as this library, in general neglect as a reading-room, had become a sort of general business room for the whole house. Here, Lady Faulconer gave audience to her housekeeper, and Sir John to his steward or groom—here the young ladies took their lessons in dancing, and German, &c., &c.—so that I was driven, perforce, to make my sitting-room the drawing-room, which was, indeed, the general rendezvous.

It was the day before we were engaged to Haughton Hall, I was employed in copying a portrait for Lady Faulconer—for, to the other accomplishments, I added that of being a very tolerable draughtsman and colourist;—this was a portrait of Lord Ulick, painted for Lady

Ulick, of which Lady Faulconer begged to have a copy.

I was placed at the table on the large bay-window—oriel, I ought, perhaps, to call it,—which commanded a view of the grounds belonging to dear, enchanting, Drystoke,—all my materials were about, and Charlotte, seated not very far from me, was engaged in preparing a drawing for her master, when Lady Faulconer came in, and without seeming to notice my presence, took a chair by the table.—She looked somewhat annoyed.

“Charlotte, your father says he shall not go to Haughton to-morrow.”—

Charlotte just lifted up her head from her occupation, and only answered by an indifferent —“Well!”—

“It vexes me,” said her mother, “because of the everlasting bother about the horses.”—

“What about the horses?” asked Charlotte, dabbling her brush in the glass—“We shall have the large britschka and four, of course.”

“Not of course, at all, as your father is not going himself,—you know *he* detests slow travelling—but any creep-mouse pace is good enough for women, you understand ; however, I do not think it either *convenable*, or proper, that we should appear at Haughton Hall, upon such an occasion, with a wretched pair of posters, dragging themselves to death, up that tremendous hill.—Why *will* people pitch their houses in such places? They ought to have one of their own windlasses from Armidale, to haul one up.”

“But why won’t papa go?”

“Oh ! its hunting morning, and the meet is at Cloverly, and he says excellent sport is expected, and the fullest field of the year, and everybody will be there, and he don’t choose to be absent, only for the pleasure of seeing a parcel of dirty colliers munch roast beef, and plumb pudding,—and hurrah, and so on.” He’s right enough there, for, as regards that, its a horrible bore—as all these fine philanthropic proceedings, in my opinion, are—and

worse, too, if one dare to speak out, but; *revenons à nos moutons*—drag up that hill with a pair of posters, and come to the door with the poor beasts looking ready to expire, —to be the laughing stock of the servants' hall at Haughton,—and I must say, I think Lady Emma's butler the most intolerable piece of plate-cleaning arrogance, I ever saw—is what I won't do,—but your father is inexorable.—He says we are spending too much already—as if such candle-end savings were of any consequence,—drops in the ocean! I wish he would look to his hunting stables; but I will tell you what I have been planning, Charlotte.—The Ulicks intend, of course, to go in their own carriage, and they must have posters, having no horses of their own—nor chance of any, this many a long day, bless 'em.—So I think to propose that we should, all go together.—The open carriage, you know, will be so much pleasanter for Lucy and Lord Ulick, than a stifling chariot—and then they can put their posters to our horses, as leaders.”

“We shall be horridly crowded,” interrupted Charlotte—“and, for my part, I think nothing so bad as a family machine loaded in and out as full as it can stuff.”

“*There*, give me leave to tell you, you are quite mistaken; with four horses you may put who you please in, and all right—with a pair, more than two are almost inadmissible.”

“I don’t think so.”

“Only imagine us dragging up the hill at Haughton, with a pair!—how shall you like that?”

“I wish papa was not always so unreasonable.”

“There is no use wishing—I know where he has *planted* himself; and its mere waste of power to attempt to move him, then.—My plan is the only one possible.”

“Why! how many shall we be?”

“Not such a dreadful number,—most of you are children—you are but a child yourself, Charlotte. I should put Lord Ulick and

Albert on the box,—Lenham, Laura, and yourself, may sit in the back seat—Lady Ulick and I, in our proper places.—As your father does not go, we shall want only Lord Ulick's man-servant and my maid—they can go in the dickey behind ;—and your Aunt Ulick's maid may find her way by coach.”

“I'm sure Aunt Ulick won't like that.”

“Well, my maid, then—but that will be very inconvenient to *me*.”

“Well,” said Charlotte, resuming her painting—“I think it is a horrid scheme—crowding and bothering.”

“Suggest a better, then.”

To which reasonable demand, Charlotte, like many another *frondeur*, had no very ready reply, so she went on with her drawing, and said nothing,—and Lady Faulconer presently left the room.

“I am afraid I shall be in the way,” I said to Charlotte. “I am just the one too many for the scheme—Pray have the kindness to step after Lady Faulconer, and tell her that I

will either give up going altogether, or find my own way in the coach."

"Oh, dear! don't think of such a thing; I am certain mamma would never hear of you're not going with us—only she has such a way of blurting out things at the wrong time—but she would be quite hurt, if you were to make any difficulty."

I did not think the fault of blurting out things at the wrong time, was exactly the one to be charged upon Lady Faulconer. I rather imagined this blurting out, as Charlotte called it, as I had once or twice suspected before, was a little stroke of policy, which, under the mask of a certain want of caution, let out, as if inadvertently, what she wished to make known.

Charlotte, however, proved to be right, so far as her mother's wishes about my place in the carriage were concerned; for when, upon the first opportunity, I mentioned the subject to Lady Faulconer, she would not hear of any other plan, and showed so much vexation at



the idea, that I was forced at once to abandon it.

Albert laughed loud when he heard of the intended arrangement. "As if Aunt Ulick would not like to go majestically in her own spick and span new carriage," cried he—"No—my mother will never persuade her to come into that scheme."

But he said no more. He was an exception to the evil habit which prevailed in this, as it does in so many other families—and which is so fatal to real harmony and sincere affection;—he never criticised the sayings and doings of his relations, behind their backs. He fearlessly spoke out, when he thought anything amiss, but only to the individual concerned,—and then only when he thought he was bound to interfere. He adhered, from a sort of native delicacy and honour, to Wesley's golden rule, which he had certainly never heard of—never to speak of the faults of our neighbours—or if we think it our duty to mention them, to let it be before their faces.

I was a silent and amused spectator of Lady Faulconer's method of effecting her object.

I was sitting reading upon one side of the same large oriel window of the drawing-room, the leaves of which were all thrown wide open, and Lady Faulconer and Lady Ulick were lounging upon a settee on the opposite side of it.

"How dreadfully hot it is, Lady Ulick! —not a breeze stirring—I hope to heaven it will not be so stifling to-morrow—or the sight of the ox, roasted whole, will make one faint."

*Lady Ulick*—(who, since her accession of dignity, had changed the somewhat pert affectation of a second-rate beauty for what she thought the languid elegance of a true member of the aristocracy)—Dear me, no — really, it makes one quite ill.—What shall you go in, Lucy?—A silk dress will be insupportable;—I was thinking of that muslin with the worked flounces and pink ribbons, you know;—I am sure I shall die of heat—and an

ox roasted whole!—what a beastly sight;—how can they think of it!

*Lady Faulconer*—Oh, I don't mean literally *that*—for I know nothing about it. I never was at one of these doings before—It's because we are all one family, I believe, that they have us now—One or two *very* near and very inoffensive neighbours is all Lady Emma admits.—She is a strange creature!—I wonder how you get on with her, Lucy!

*Lady Ulick* (affectedly)—Oh, we get on vastly well, together, I assure you—I think she takes to me—something about me seems to suit her—I am sure I can't guess what it is, for I am afraid I am a horrid, stupid creature!

*Lady Faulconer* (laughing)—Don't fish for compliments—I never let them be angled out of me; but one thing I will say, and no one can gainsay me—Lady Ulick is a very pretty creature, indeed, when she looks her best, and doesn't get that provoking flush upon her face, from being overheated, which it vexes me sadly

to see. I wish the weather would be a little cooler—Lord Ulick will be sadly mortified if you don't look your best upon this sort of occasion. There is Mr. Glenroy to be there—the monstrous rich Scotchman, who is as proud as if he were Duke of Argyle, and as biting as if he were the *Edinburgh Review* in person.

*Lady Ulick*—Oh, goodness me!—I shall be so frightened, I am sure—dear me! I wish I wasn't so dreadfully shy—I shan't be able to look up.

*Lady Faulconer*—Never mind whether you look up or not—only look pretty—that's the main thing.

*Lady Ulick*—But this horrid heat—and I do flush so——

*Lady Faulconer*—Of course you'll go with your carriage open?—Nothing heats one's face like sitting in a close carriage.

*Lady Ulick* — Open! — but it won't open——

*Lady Faulconer*—Won't it, really—I had

quite forgotten—that is *really* provoking——

*Lady Ulick*—Isn't it—I wish Lady Emma had thought of that when she bought it for us.

*Lady Faulconer*—Oh! dear Lady Emma!—She's a sweet woman, to be sure—and there was something particularly kind in her giving you a carriage. Many people might have thought, that, in your position, it was rather a superfluity—relations, in general, are so fond of keeping one *down*; but, I dare say, it never struck her how much nicer a landaulet would have been than a chariot—or—chariots are made to open now, but they are more expensive, so;—and dear Lady Emma, with all her generosity, never loses sight of the main chance, I am told—making a purse out of her income. I wish it may be for Lord Ulick, I am sure, but I hope he don't count upon it. Poor Lady Emma!—Well, she's a dear, sweet creature, there's no doubt about *that*!—but I quite hate the thought of your poking yourself into that horrid close carriage—you'll

come out of it as if you had been in the oven ; you'd better put one of the boys in and come with me.

*Lady Ulick* (with dignity)—I like to go in my own carriage.

*Lady Faulconer* (laughing, with much appearance of good humour)—Oh, to be sure ! When one has an own carriage for the first time in one's life, one does love to ride in it, even if one should come out as red as a full-blown peony.

*Lady Ulick*—But you don't really . . .

*Lady Faulconer*—But *I do* really—But what matters *that*—it shall ride in its own coach, shan't it ?”

*Lady Ulick* (scornfully)—As if *I* cared.

*Lady Faulconer*—Why, you don't really believe I think you so silly as to care—Caring how you look is one thing upon such an occasion—it is a matter of importance—Caring whether Lady Emma's footman, John, and her page, Kit, see you get out of your carriage or mine, is really a matter beneath contempt—

and they, depend upon it, will be the only people in the secret. Lady Emma will never know, or care to know—but she will care that her brother's bride, by her appearance, should justify his choice, especially to Mr. Glenroy, the proudest man in all Scotland.

*Lady Ulick*—Well, if you would be so kind—but I shall crowd you.

*Lady Faulconer*—Why to be sure—but never mind that—I am sure the girls won't—and you know I shall not—The only difficulty is the weight.—Sir John is in his economics to-day, and won't allow us four horses. We shall creep along at a snail's pace.—Stay—let me see—one, two, three, four—I have it—you shall put your posters to my carriage, which is light for its size—we shall fly like the wind,—the fresh air will blow upon us deliciously, as it does when one goes fast, and we shall come in fresh and sweet as roses.

*Lady Ulick*—Dear sister—you are so kind.

*Lady Faulconer* (kissing her)—Don't mention it, my sweet bird—it's only that I look

upon you as my eldest daughter, and have a mother's anxiety about your first appearance upon these boards.

*Lady Ulick*—But the servants—

*Lady Faulconer*—Oh, we'll manage that—I will do without a footman—Lord Ulick's man and *your* maid, will go upon the dickey behind.—You know we have one which we put on when we drive four—as for Carnaby, my maid, she must go by coach—she won't like it, poor thing, but she must submit.

*Lady Ulick*—I'm sure Wilson would rather throw up her place, than not travel with me.

*Lady Faulconer*—When you have been used a little longer to the possession of a maid, they won't venture to be such *very* great bodies—but really, dear, I think this is the best plan for you.

*Lady Ulick*—Yes; I suppose so—but I think I must ask Lord Ulick.

*Lady Faulconer*—Oh! by all means—good little dear!—Don't venture to go in sister's carriage, without husband's leave.



*Lady Ulick*—He never refuses me anything—but I think he ought to be asked about it.

*Lady Faulconer* (recollecting herself)—Seriously, my dear, I think you a thousand times right—so pray, find him, and ask him—Don't say anything, however, about your fear of crowding us—for I assure you, we shall not think a moment of that—only tell him your natural fears for your face breaking out into red—he will, I am sure, be of your opinion.

And so he was, or rather of no opinion all.

He had rather set his heart, it seemed, upon going in his own brougham, with his own servants, and his own wife ; but, with a seaman's easy good-nature, he readily gave way. He was, moreover, certainly as anxious, as it was his nature to be about anything, that his wife should look her best of beauty on the ensuing occasion. So all was settled, as the presiding genius of the party intended, and the following morning we set out in the large britschka, with four horses,—Lord Ulick' and

Albert upon the box, the two ladies occupying the front seat of the carriage; and I, with my fair young friends, with our backs to the horses. We travelled at a good speed, and the air blew fresh in the faces of those who sat opposite to us, though we in front were stifling. Ladies Ulick and Faulconer exchanged congratulations upon this charming coolness and freshness.

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The conversation, as we journeyed along, amused, though it irritated me; and I could not help listening, comfortably leaning back in my corner of the carriage, in spite of Miss Charlotte's attempts to engage in a whispering conversation on our own side.

I hate talking in a carriage; I prefer listening to speaking upon most occasions, but especially there.

The discourse ran, as usual, upon the delinquencies of neighbours. It is a strange

*tic*, I think, more peculiarly belonging to our English nation, that criticism almost invariably assumes the character of censure. We seem to regard the detection of blemishes as the only criterion of a just discernment into character, or appreciation in the arts—that higher walk of criticism of which, Madam de Staël has left us so beautiful a specimen in her book upon Germany, and which belongs to the finest and most delicate of our perceptions—namely, the pointing out those hidden beauties which escape the eye of the many, a process by which the general taste is essentially refined and elevated, we seem not to appreciate.

We forget that in most human characters, as in most human performances, the defects necessarily attendant upon all mortal things lie mostly upon the surface—apparent to any one ; to point out the beauties, most often requires a finer power of discrimination. Some of these, indeed, are obvious, and escape no one ; but a thousand hidden charms and

graces are to be discovered in the characters of men, as well as in the works of genius, unobserved by those who are too dull of comprehension to perceive their existence, or too indifferent to beauty to search them out.

The anatomist discerns all the fine hidden relations, adaptations, and perfections, of the bodily frame—the botanist dives into the sweet recesses of nature, and finds a beauty of system and plan, which escapes even the loving poet—and, yet, the poet! what delights he discovers and displays to our imagination! which otherwise were lost to the observer. It is his part to clear the eye of the mind, and teach us how to see, and adore, and love; and it ought to be the part of a just, discriminating criticism, to aid the generous task. But enough of this. I wish, at least, I could see more of the spirit I am describing, when people are discussing their neighbours; and that one could now and then hear a little word put in about the merits, as well as the *demerits*, of individuals.

In this way, however, things certainly did not go on in the carriage where I was sitting.

The talk was at first of one person, then another, whose names, even, were strangers to me, but at last I began to be interested. The inhabitants of Haughton Hall were brought upon the carpet, and the conversation thus going on, which, for brevity and convenience sake, I shall arrange in the play-making fashion.

*Lady Faulconer*—I wonder how you'll get on there?

*Lady Ulick*—Oh! I shall do very well with Ulick's help. Lady Emma seems good-natured enough.

*Lady Faulconer*—Yes, so I believe—but it is so disagreeable to have to deal with *odd* people—and she is so monstrously original.

*Lady Ulick*—I don't know quite what you mean by *that*. I don't see anything very odd about her. She was dressed, to be sure, not quite in *la derniere mode*, but there was nothing positively *outré* about her.

*Lady Faulconer*—I dare say not. Ladies'

maids take care their mistresses shall not wear their old clothes till they are absolutely a caricature; but I was not exactly thinking of gowns and petticoats—I don't measure people precisely by the fullness of their skirts—I was thinking of other matters—That boy, for instance—what is he? and who is he? Does Lord Ulick know anything about him?

*Lady Ulick*—I'm sure I can't tell—I never asked, and he never mentioned the child to me—but now I think of it, 'tis rather odd—I wonder what he is?

*Lady Faulconer*—Other people besides yourself have felt that wonder—Well, odd things have certainly taken place at Haughton Hall—I never go there, but I feel as if I were entering a place as full of mysteries as an old romance. Now the little girl—great girl she is growing into—she's getting on, and a remarkably forward, fine girl of her age she is.

“And how Lady Emma does dress her,” put in Charlotte.

*Lady Faulconer*—I never saw much to

object to in her dress—it's very plain, to be sure—but so are all the dresses of young ladies of that age—If their mothers understand anything of the world—which probably Lady Emma does, about as much as my glove.

*Charlotte* — But, really, Mamma — such frocks!—but I don't think Lady Emma cares for Imogene the least in the world—she loves nothing but the boy. Everything is to give way to the fancies of that little tyrant. I wonder Imogene submits to it—but when I tell her so, she says—‘Oh! he is very unfortunate, and wicked people have robbed him of his money—and, therefore, one ought to make much of him,’—As if *that* was a reason for giving way to people.

Lady Faulconer and Lady Ulick whisper.

*Charlotte* (turning to me, with a smile of derision)—What do you think, Lenham?—They've got a tutor, and no governess.—I expect Imogene will turn out quite queer, though, I must say, she's a nice girl now, if she were not rather conceited, and fond of

managing—though she's good-natured enough, and lets one do as one likes—but one can't help feeling it is 'lets one'—she makes one, somehow, feel that.

*Lenham*—She can hardly help it in her own house.

*Charlotte*—Oh, I don't mean to blame her. She knows she is a great heiress. Everybody is dinning that into her ears all day long—and to hear her talk about it—and the duties it obliges her to—and about the poor work-people at Armidale—nasty creatures!—whom she makes quite pets and favourites of. I declare it's as good as a comedy to hear the little thing go on.

*Lenham*—Oh! I am sorry she parades in this way—by Albert's account, I fancied her the simplest, as well as loveliest creature in the world—As good as she was pretty, without seeming to be conscious that she was either good or pretty—Never thinking of herself at all.

*Charlotte*—Albert is such a painter *en beau*, of everything he likes . . . .



*Lady Faulconer* (interrupting).—I don't suppose it's any proof that Albert has any particular liking for Miss Aubrey, because he does her a little more justice than you, Charlotte, seemed inclined to do—Albert does every one justice.

“By executing justice on no one,” whispered Charlotte to me.

*Lady Faulconer*—That I *will* say for him—but, as for little Imogene, she is too much of a child for a boy of his age to trouble himself about. Only, if you abuse her, he is certain to defend her—as he does, if you rail at poor Nan in the donkey cart. Imogene is a nice little girl, pretty and good; but not the one *quite* to suite Albert's taste, I think.

I was surprised at this; I had always fancied, until then, that Albert, in a boyish way, was captivated by the little Imogene; but, of course, his mother must know best.

Charlotte was silenced, yet, as usual, stood neither rebuked nor abashed. She sat biting her lip, with a slightly-contemptuous smile

upon her face, whilst her mother was speaking; and, as soon as she had ended, turned to me, and abruptly changed the conversation, by asking whether I ever saw a race between men in sacks?

Lady Faulconer and Lady Ulick continued their whispering conversation, of which I only caught—"Singular! Not very good tempered, they say, when one comes to know her, in spite of her smooth looks—curious conduct to her husband. He was a *very* unhappy man—died of grief—parted irrevocably, before—He would not expose her—open disgrace—hushed up—all came out at the death-bed—intended to alter his will—no time—so she got that enormous allowance—Hope she will; she ought to do something *very* handsome for you and Lord Ulick."

*Lady Ulick*—I'm sure I never *shall* like her.

*Lady Faulconer*—Oh yes, you will,—she's very plausible, and you won't come into opposition with her,—at all events, dear, try to

like her—You know she has the power of doing so much, if she pleases.

The conversation then passed to Mr. Glenroy, —and this was the way in which that gentleman was handled.

*Lady Ulick*—What, and who's this Mr. Glenroy, that one hears so much about?

*Lady Faulconer*—Heaven knows—I don't. —All I can hear is, that he's of a very ancient Scotch family,—all Scotch beggars are that, you know—but whether he's rich or poor, I can't learn—at all events I don't believe they have any expectations from him. But rich or poor, he's as proud as Lucifer himself—and does all he can to make the little heiress as proud and insolent as he is—at least so they say —Puffing the child up with all sorts of nonsense.—Teaching an animal of that age, that she ought to be doing good already!—As if doing good was not the idea to fill a child's heart with pride and vanity, and the worst sort of it.—I wonder the little creature is no worse than she is—with her schools, and

her feasts, and her clubs—where she is carried, poor little thing, sorely against her will, as I believe,—only to make a fuss about her as an heiress.—A thing Mr. Glenroy *will* do—merely as they say, to spite Lady Emma, who hates to have the child heiressed about in that absurd manner;—but she and Mr. Glenroy detest each other.

*Lady Ulick*—Is Mr. Glenroy there now?

*Lady Faulconer*—Of course.—He's always there upon these occasions.—He's the child's guardian, you know—But he has no concern with Lady Emma,—so your business is to side with Lady Emma.—It's natural you should—you are her sister-in-law, you know.

*Lady Ulick*—I am sure I shall abhor this Mr. Glenroy—what is he like?

*Lady Faulconer* — I never saw him but once—Like?—why he's like a pair of walking stilts, with the sourest face you ever saw at the top—He's as thin as a skeleton, and such an expression of countenance!

*Charlotte*—Oh, Mamma,—and you said he was a perfect gentleman!

*Lady Faulconer*—Did I?—Well so he is, only a world too formal—but he's a dreadful person, in spite of that.—However, let us have done talking of what we have no business with—people's disagreeables and faults—*our* business is to like them and get on with them as well as we can, now we are all connected together—and I beg, girls, you will make yourselves as pleasant as possible. So, Charlotte, don't let me have any of your pert, interrupting speeches, when I am making the agreeable—do you hear?—and Laura, for heaven's sake! *do* hold up your head, and not sit lounging and poking in your indolent, indifferent way—disgracing both governess, and dancing master.—Do you hear, girls?

And Lady Faulconer, drawing her veil over her face, closed her eyes, and composed herself to sleep for the remainder of the journey.

## CHAPTER III.

I prithee, lady, have a better cheer,  
If thou engrossest all the griefs are thine,  
Thou robb'st me of a moiety——

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

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“DEAR Lady Emma! how charmingly you are looking!—And Imogene—where, and how is she?—Is that Eugene?—How he has grown, and improved! And delicious Haughton!—more beautiful than ever!”

Lady Emma received us in the hall, in compliment to her sister-in-law, or through affection for her brother. She accepted Lady Faulconer's cordial greeting with a certain quiet reserve of manner which would have been to me very chilling,—but Lady Faulconer did not seem to perceive it, her delight appeared

so great in the meeting. Lady Ulick hung rather back, and looked a little strangely at seeing her sister assume to herself an air of affectionate cordiality, not to say familiarity, which she evidently thought ought to have been her part. The entrance of Lord Ulick, who had stayed behind to give some directions about the carriage, put a stop, however, to such thoughts. His sister and he embraced, and then we all adjourned to the breakfast-room, the windows of which were thrown wide open, and being shaded by trees and creepers, were deliciously cool.

“How delightful all this is,” cried Lord Ulick, rubbing his hands with glee. — “Why, Emma, this is a perfect paradise, in summer.—One can form no idea of what it is in winter.—It *was* cold, wasn’t it, when we were here before ; but where’s my pretty little niece—where’s Imogene?”

“She is walking out with Mr. Glenroy, I believe.”

“Oh ! he’s here, is he?—Well, I’m glad of

that;—he's a capital old fellow, is that old Scotchman."

"Eugene," said Lady Emma,—“your young friends will like, perhaps, to take a run out before dressing-time.—We dine at seven,”—looking at her watch.—“Will you like to see your rooms?—Eugene, my dear, Mr. Lenham and Mr. Faulconer are put into the two rooms adjoining your's.—See that they are properly attended to, my dear,—and that their luggage, etc. are brought up. Phillips is new to his place, remember;—you must look him up, if he is careless. I leave you, my love, to do the honours of Haughton to your friends.—Come, ladies, shall I show you your rooms?—Ulick, dear, you are in the old place.—How Miss Charlotte grows!—Miss Laura, you look a little tired. It is a dreadfully hot day.”

So, having thus committed the care of the boys especially to the charge of Eugene, almost in a manner as if he were master of the house, Lady Emma proceeded up stairs with her other guests; and I saw no more of any



one except Albert and Eugene, till all the company were assembled in the drawing-room.

We three boys walked out together;—Eugene taking upon himself the office of master of the house, to the full extent of what were apparently Lady Emma's wishes.

He strolled with us through the gardens, where some alterations were about being made, and stopped to give his opinion, and to propose certain modifications of the plan, in the tone of one perfectly authorised so to do. I thought I could discover in the air of the gardeners that sort of sulky, unwilling submission, which is accorded to authority which cannot be disputed, and which is not willingly acknowledged;—but Eugene appeared quite unobservant of, or indifferent to, this. He walked along with his hands in his pockets, and an abstracted air, —saying little, though he did not seem to intend rudeness. He appeared, indeed, to intend nothing but to follow the present humour, whatever it might chance to be.

He asked us whether we should like to see the stables.

To which Albert answered by a glad assent.

“Oh! you like the stables—I hate ’em,” said Eugene.

“Hate ’em!—What! not love horses!—Oh, if you saw my father’s hunters!”

“They smell so nasty, the stables do—I’ve got a pony—But I don’t care for him—Imogene’s the woman for you—She dotes upon her pony.”

“I’ll be sworn she loves and likes everything a girl ought to do,” cried Albert, with enthusiasm—“She’s the nicest girl I know anywhere.”

Eugene made no reply. The colour rose in his very handsome, half-childish, half-boy’s face; but whether from pleasure or vexation, it would be hard to say.

He took us, however, to the stable yards; and, whilst Albert visited the horses, talked with the grooms, admired and criticised, Eugene amused himself with feeding a very old dog, who crawled out of one of the stalls to welcome him—giving him some bread he had in his pocket.

“What a very old dog!” said I.

“He was papa’s dog”—was the answer.

“He’s old, but I hope he won’t die.”

“Very old, I should think.”

“Older than me—two years older than me—that’s old for a dog, isn’t it?—But he mustn’t die—He’s papa’s dog.”

“Then I suppose you love him very much.”

“Here, Matamoro”—and the boy knelt and buried his face in the dog’s almost lion-like mane.

This was all the emotion he showed. He recovered his usual *sans souci* air immediately—a remarkable instance of self-possession in a boy of that age—and leading the way to the house showed us to our rooms. He gave Phillips—the young man who was to wait upon us—one or two orders, with the authority of a Prince of the Blood Royal, and then went away.

It is marvellous how precocious children may become under some circumstances.

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The drawing-room was a very large, handsome apartment, splendidly furnished.—The company in the house were not yet assembled there, when Albert and I made our appearance, which was a relief, we feeling excessively shy, and as awkward as two growing boys know how to do.

The only persons in the room were Lady Emma, Mr. Glenroy, Eugene, Imogene, and a tall, pale, sickly-looking man, who kept himself rather in the back-ground.

Lady Emma and Mr. Glenroy were seated upon opposite sides of the apartment, and at some distance from each other. She was thrown back in a huge arm-chair, covered with rich damask, upon the arm of which, Eugene—kneeling upon the ground—was leaning, looking up into her face, but neither of them apparently speaking. Mr. Glenroy was seated at a table with a young girl sitting closely by his side, to whom he was showing some prints, maps, or plans, I know not which, from a large book which lay open before them. The young

girl, who appeared deeply engaged, was Imogene.

Mr. Glenroy looked up as we opened the door.

“Imogene, —do the honours of Haughton to your young friends.”

She left her seat in a moment, and came forward, holding out her hand to Albert and saying, in the sweetest, simplest manner in the world—

“I am very glad to see you, Albert.”

“Thank you, Imogene.—This is my friend, Lenham.”

“I am very glad to see you, Mr. Lenham.”

Imogene Aubrey had that day completed her tenth or eleventh year, I forget which. She was not tall for her age, and seemed as if she would only reach to the middle size ; but possessed a lithe and beautiful figure, as far as beauty can be predicated of a growing young creature of that age. She was dressed in a perfectly simple muslin frock, bound about her waist with a broad blue ribbon, forming an

immense bow behind—a dress which I thought displayed her figure to the greatest advantage. Two blue ribbons making bows, tying up her sleeves, and displaying her long, slender, lily-white arms; a black velvet round her neck, with a small locket containing, as I believe, her father's hair, completed her costume—the pleasing effect of which was aided by her beautiful flowing tresses, which, though they had not been allowed to grow very long, yet hung about her in great abundance, and adorned a countenance such as I have never seen elsewhere, and cannot hope to see again.

It was not its beauty, though, I believe, it had every pretension to be considered beautiful,—but it was the character of the whole that was so delightful. In the expression you forgot to think of beauty—Words cannot describe the sweetness, the intelligence, the incomparable simplicity and goodness of that countenance. Fearless and frank—for what had such simplicity to fear?—Sweet, and tender, and good—for, of what a heart was it the

interpreter? Lively and intelligent—for what generous gaiety of spirit,—what clearness and strength of intellect lay behind it?

Charming—charming girl!

I fell not into boys' love with her, not I—I would as soon have doted upon some 'bright particular star;'—but I glanced at Albert, and I saw the colour mount to his young cheek, and his bright eyes grow still brighter, as they met hers.

Happy age!—'that dallied with the innocence of love.'—He knew nothing of those nervous tremors, that fatal, false shame, which disturb the lover's peace in later years. His affection was as simple as it was sincere.—The pleasure of seeing her, and being beloved by her, was enough for him.

Lady Emma I will next describe as she appeared to me, now that I had time to observe her, which, after all I had heard, I did with extreme curiosity.

She was still super-eminently handsome, though care, sorrow, anxiety—a certain dis-

content, or rather dissatisfaction, were written upon the yet lovely features. She was tall, and her figure replete with symmetry and grace, to which a certain languid melancholy in her motions and gestures gave much interest. The general expression of her countenance was sweet and gentle, but pensive—her voice was harmony itself.

She was dressed in black, in spite of the time of year, but with a great profusion of white, floating—and I don't know how—about her; and this costume altogether set off the lovely whiteness of her complexion to exquisite advantage. Taken all in all, she appeared to my young eyes something almost above humanity. An angel! but for the melancholy;—a seraph! but for the reserve, amounting to coldness! But beautiful and interesting beyond description.

The boy, who now hung upon the arm of her chair, looking up into her face, and dropping a sentence now and then, and on whom her eyes were cast down with an expression of



tender, melancholy pleasure, and a loving, but sad smile, was certainly as remarkable for his extreme beauty, as Lady Emma herself.

Now that he was in his evening dress of black velvet, with a collar of the very richest lace falling down, so as to display the noble proportions of his head and neck, over which his fine hair fell in large abundant curls—he was a perfect study.

Albert and I, two schoolboys, older than he, and more manly for our years—accustomed to the stern, rough uses of the boys' world, looked both of us, I believe, with a secret contempt, upon this spoiled pet of a fair woman's fancy;—and I think, were neither of us inclined to like Eugene.—It might be envy,—but I rather imagine it was a pure matter of taste—He was not to our taste—He was not like an English boy. Moreover, he was not an English boy; he was the son of a Bey of Egypt, by an Eastern mother; and, though it was known that the Bey, his father, was an Englishman, we were not either of us inclined to

admit the claims of Eugene, to be exactly one of us—A cricketing, boxing, boating, or even sapping, English fellow.

Mr. Glenroy was as striking a looking person, in his way, as were those I have described, though after a very different fashion. He was remarkably tall, long-limbed, and might have appeared gaunt and awkward, but for an air of dignified gentleman-like-ness, if I may be allowed the expression, which distinguished him.—His features were cast in the very strongest manner, according to the general supposed type, of his somewhat hard-featured countrymen;—and the expression of his face was usually cold and saturnine, though extremely clever and sensible. It was impossible to look at Mr. Glenroy, without being obliged to respect, and inclined to fear him; but, like other countenances of the same description, when the sun-light of tenderness, or satisfaction spread over it, few things could be more winning or beautiful. It was sufficient even to see him look at Imogene, to feel inclined to love him.

The affection existing between these two, was, in truth, beautiful.

Imogene, in the winning confidence of that simplicity and singleness of heart and purpose, which was her distinguishing characteristic, never thought of being afraid of Mr. Glenroy ; and the innocent reliance of love which she showed him, in return for the regard and interest he displayed for her, had gone deep into the heart of the stern and haughty man. It is so delightful to those who keep the whole world at a certain awful distance, when an innocent like this breaks the charmed circle, which she has been too guileless and affectionate herself to perceive.

It was plain that Mr. Glenroy loved the young girl with an exclusive devotion, which amounted almost to passion—*was* a passion—though of a peculiar kind. For in characters like his, strong affections, be they what they may, speedily assume the form of passions. She seemed to have become the main object, as she was the sole delight, of his life. To

talk with her, to guide, to instruct—even to have her seated by him—appeared to be not only the pleasure, but the great necessity of his existence.

Love, such as this, all unexpressed by words as it was, found its way to the little girl's heart; and she loved Mr. Glenroy as dearly as he loved her. That is to say, as much as such a return is possible. But the stream descends with a natural impetus, with which it never can be made to flow back. God has appointed it so. The passing generation holds the power, but the rising one holds the love.

However, dear little Imogene loved Mr. Glenroy with her whole honest heart; and feared him, not the least in the world.

I wish I could say the same as regarded her mother.

In this instance, as in so many others connected with this unhappy case, the feelings seemed to have taken an unnatural turn. The child adored her mother; loved her with a deep intensity which one looked upon almost

with awe; but she feared her—feared her in a proportion equal to this deep, deep love. ‘Perfect love casteth out fear,’—but that must be to the all-perfect. With mortal man, alas! intense affection is, sometimes, unhappily the parent of fear.

It was Lady Emma’s misfortune—many would have said her fault—that, in the unnatural division of her affections, and the secret certainty that this child, so worshipped by all around her, was nothing more nor less than a usurper of the rights of others—it was impossible for her manner not to be tinctured by these most painful ideas.

She knew their injustice;—she endeavoured to atone for her involuntary coldness, by every sort of indulgence and care, but the instincts of the little girl’s heart remained unsatisfied; and she felt a fear of offending;—a certain dread of her mother, which, though it rather enhanced than diminished the admiration, nay, adoration, with which she regarded her, prevented her manners from being either demonstrative or caressing.

Eugene, on the contrary, was both.—He felt himself, the object of so much solicitude and affection ; he was, in short, made so thoroughly a spoiled child of, that it was impossible but he should feel at ease, and confident in his power of pleasing. He gave way to all the caprices of his humour, and was, to Lady Emma, interesting, in spite of his faults, perhaps on account of them, for he certainly did love her, and was proud of her evident partiality. He was a clever and remarkable boy ; haughty but of vehement affections, and at times seemed to possess extraordinary powers of exertion ;—what he wanted was stability—that species of strength which is shown by perseverance in pursuit of an object of acquisition ; and by constancy and equability in the affections, or, at least, in their demonstration. What he attempted was done by starts of violent effort, which soon subsided into a weariness, the most complete, and an indolence and inactivity which nothing could conquer, till the fit of excitement returned again. It was with the

objects of his love as with those of his other pursuits—vehement proofs of an almost passionate devotion, would be succeeded by long intervals of neglect, and an almost stupid indifference. This fault was less shown to Lady Emma, to whom the boy seemed strongly attached; but his conduct to Imogene was a perfect example of it—now, seeming ready to adore the very ground on which she trod, and jealous in the extreme if she showed merely common goodwill to others; and, again, quite absorbed, as it appeared, in himself, utterly neglectful of her, and indifferent to her proceedings; and even sullen, and almost rude, if she presumed to interfere with him.

The divine sweetness with which Imogene bore all these changes of humour was charming. I have often told her, after we grew well-acquainted, how I wondered that she could put up with it all in the way she did; her answer was always to the same effect—

“Ah, poor boy! he has been so unfortunate.—His father such a great man as he

was ; and, poor boy ! to have lost him, and been robbed of everything he has, by wicked people. Oh, Mr. Lenham ! when one thinks of *that*, one ought *never* to be out of humour with him.—Besides, Mamma says, he cannot help it. He is not quite like an English boy. She says, he feels in a way English boys have no idea of. I don't know for that about English boys—but I sometimes wish Eugene were a little more like an English boy, poor dear fellow !”

It remains only to describe the pale and silent figure, standing a little apart. It was that of Mr. Elmsley, the tutor.—I think I mentioned, that one subject of animadversion, as to the doings at Haughton Hall, which I heard in the course of our drive, was that the education of Miss Aubrey was entrusted, at present at least, to the care of a tutor, rather than of a governess.—Lady Emma, however, could not be blamed for this. It was well-known that the arrangement was completely the doing of Mr. Glenroy, whose contempt for,



and distrust of, women, was generally notorious.—Mr. Elmsley was a man of extremely delicate health, and of the quietest and most reserved manners ;—but his intellectual accomplishments were of the highest order, and his strong good sense and gentleness of temper united, exercised, I believe, the happiest influence in the development of the sweet Imogene's character.

The rest of the company now came dropping in—First, Lord Ulick and his pretty wife. She had certainly contrived to look extremely pretty, and was received, when presented to Mr. Glenroy, with his usual old-world, and somewhat formal, cordiality—he seemed, however, inclined to be pleased with her. A thing which cannot be exactly predicated of Lady Faulconer or of her daughters, though the lady took evidently great pains to please. She did not seem to succeed.

A few other guests now joined the party.. The clergymen of the two parishes, between which the property of Haughton was divided, being among them.

Albert and I, much against our inclination, were invited to join the dinner-party. We would rather have drunk tea with the young ladies, and enjoyed the run of the library and drawing-room. Eugene, child as he was, also dined with us. The three girls were, therefore, left to themselves, which Albert and I thought a great pity—and which Charlotte showed her sense of, by a most significant shrug and wry face, as I passed her to follow the rest into the dining-room. The dinner abused the usual privilege of country dinners to be dull. Nothing could exceed its dullness—Lady Emma was spiritless and languid, and it evidently cost her the greatest effort to keep up conversation at all. Mr. Elmsley, who sat as croupier opposite to her, contrived in that position to find something to say, but in so low a voice that only the ladies close by him were the better for it.

Lord Ulick swallowed yawn after yawn, and talked a little about the weather to the clergymen, who sat opposite to him. Mr. Glenroy

was cold and sententious—Albert and I as still as mice, making only a few significant signs to each other, like ill-bred schoolboys as we were ; and Eugene seemed perfectly absent from the scene, unless when some favourite dish was presented to him, when he eat rather with the delicacy of an experienced gourmand than the voracity of a growing boy.

After dinner, an evening succeeded of rather more animation. Lady Faulconer proposed to set us young ones down to cards, by way of something to do. Lady Emma gave her consent with indifference. Charlotte was directed to teach the game to Imogene and Eugene, who had never either of them, I believe, touched a card before. Imogene seemed highly to enjoy the business. The exercise of skill, in any form, was delightful to her ; and when she saw that the pool was provided by Lady Emma, and with a compensation also for all losers, she was perfectly happy. Otherwise, to have been winning other people's money, would, I am sure, have effectually

spoiled her pleasure. Eugene also fastened upon this new occupation with an avidity that seemed almost ominous. Albert sat by Imogene, and to him Charlotte devolved the office of teaching and assisting her, whilst she herself performed the same office for Eugene. Albert looked very happy, and so did Imogene—for he was as clever a master, as she an apt scholar, and she delighted in being with those who called her faculties into play. They agreed, at last, to become partners. The little girl was now all gaiety and animation—almost screaming with delight, when, after long and deep scheming, she got the right card, and showed it to Albert with the most triumphant exultation. Albert watched and looked at her with the air that a grown man extends to a child. He had so entirely ceased to be a child, and she was still so much one! I saw she was quite of his opinion as to their relative dignities, and appeared very particularly flattered by the attention of one so much bigger than herself. In short, she was in tip-

top spirits, and yet so sweet and gentle withal, that never was intoxication of this sort so innocent and pleasing.

Mr. Glenroy had risen, and stood by the table watching the game. I caught a glance at his face. He looked as if he could have devoured her. Presently, he changed his place, and took a chair, and sat down to a table just behind her, with a book in his hand; but he read little,—her merry laughs always made him raise his head, and look at her so lovingly!

After the game was over, I observed that he followed Albert, and sat down by the place where the boy was standing, and engaged him in conversation. His countenance expressed satisfaction; but every one was more than pleased that conversed with the intelligent, engaging Albert.

The partners won the pool.

“What shall we do with it, Albert?” cries Imogene.”

“Why, divide it, of course,” put in Charlotte.

“ Divide it.—What for ? ”

“ Why, to take the money, to be sure, *dear*, ”  
—instead of ‘ little goose,’ which was upon her  
tongue’s end.

“ But what shall we do with the money ?—  
Oh, I know !—I know ! Albert, let’s give a  
feast with it,—let’s have them all to tea and  
cake—not housekeeper’s-room cake—real shop  
cake ;—and let’s go and buy it our ownselves.  
There’s such delicious almond cake and mac-  
aroons at Littleton. Do, Albert—do——”

“ Yes, by all means.—To-morrow ? ”

“ No, to-morrow we’ll be so busy—I don’t  
know when will be best,—but the day after.”

“ But I’m afraid mamma’s going home the  
day after.”

“ Oh, she won’t !—she won’t !—Lady Faul-  
coner,” flying to her—“ You’ll stay the day  
after to-morrow, won’t you ? because we’ve  
got the pool, and Albert and I are going to  
give a feast of our own, with real cake from  
the shops.—Do—do.”

“ My dear,” looking towards Lady Emma—

“but I am afraid of intruding upon your mamma,—I believe we must go home.”

A wistful glance at her mother;—then a sort of timid beseeching appeal; as much as to say,—won’t you, Mamma?

“If Lady Faulconer will give us another day at this stupid place,” Lady Emma began. “Who won the pool?”

“Albert Faulconer and Imogene,”—answered Eugene, who had resumed his usual place by Lady Emma;—“but, Mamma, they want to make a feast with it.—Tea out of doors;—I think it’s a nice plan.”

“And so do I,” said Lady Emma, with more than usual cheerfulness,—“and I hope we shall persuade Lady Faulconer to give us another day.”

Which, Lady Faulconer was not in the least unwilling to do.

## CHAPTER IV.

How dull it were to pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use.

TENNYSON.

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THE next day was that of the great feast at Armidale.

All of us, that is to say, the younger portion of the party, were in high spirits.—Imogene the gayest of the gay. Excessively busy, and in high consultation with Mr. Glenroy and her mother; for Mr. Glenroy insisted upon making her take a share in the planning of every thing; and he certainly by this method had attained one object.—Imogene was already quite a little woman of business.

When I said all of us young ones were in the



highest spirits, I must except one, Eugene.—He seemed, it did not very well appear why, out of sorts, and ill at ease. It might be that the boy was really put into a false position by Lady Emma's somewhat injudicious attempts to bring him forward upon every occasion, and place him upon an equality with Imogene, as one, whose wishes she expected should be equally consulted ; and this being met, upon Mr. Glenroy's side, by a cold and quiet, but obstinate determination, as it seemed, to keep him in the back ground.

Eugene was far too quick—for, indeed, his perceptions might be called almost precocious—not to discover this.—He hated Mr. Glenroy, accordingly, and returned that gentleman's dislike with an air of haughty, sullen indifference. There seemed to be a shade of jealousy towards Imogene, also, existing. He was cross and cold to her, though, to please her mother, the dear girl took every pains in the world to bring him forward—asking his advice, and consulting him upon a thousand little matters, in spite of the evident reluctance and impatience of Mr. Glenroy.

Lady Faulconer, who never failed in any purpose, upon which she set her heart, had not thrown away the last evening. She had exerted herself, and with such good success, to make her way with Lady Emma, that she had evidently gained greatly in her favour, and had almost won her confidence.—The poor desolated heart, so yearned for some one in whom it could confide.—Though the great secret was, under the seal of a solemn promise to Mr. Glenroy, buried in silence,—yet there was many a smaller anxiety and care, which it was a relief to talk over with a sensible woman;—especially one evidently well versed in that knowledge of the world in which Emma knew herself to be so deficient.

They had already advanced so far in this sort of good understanding, that the following conversation took place, as they were sitting after breakfast at the drawing-room window, waiting for the half-hour to elapse before we were to start for Armidale. The young people were grouped together in the flower-garden,

which, spread with its parterres, and urns, and baskets, and narrow walks of turf, in all the gorgeous array of our flower gardens in summer—in front a flight of steps which fell from the centre of the oriel window to the parterre. Upon it Albert and Imogene, with Charlotte and Laura, were sitting. Eugene, either sullen or thoughtful, was leaning against the pedestal of one of the vases, listlessly pulling to pieces a large bunch of roses that he held in his hand.

The eyes of Lady Faulconer followed those of Lady Emma, which fell first upon the group upon the steps, and then travelled towards Eugene. The fond foster-mother's brow contracted as she looked at him.

“What a lovely boy he is!”—Lady Faulconer began.—“I think it is impossible to conceive of a more interesting creature.—I don't know what there is about him—but there is a something—a refinement of form and expression that one vainly looks for in our English boys.”

“Do you think so?”—languidly, and her eyes still fixed upon him.—“Poor fellow!—he does not look happy—he is not in his element—They leave him out.”

“No; I think not that. — One should rather say he leaves *them* out.—I think we can understand how it is. There is a delicacy—a susceptibility about him which is, I fear, perpetually *froissé*, by the bluntness, frankness (with a little laugh)—out with the real word—roughness then, of English school-boys. Albert is the dearest fellow in the world—but they do get strange *façons* at school—there is no help for it—go they must, and rough it through, and they all turn out right at last—but that fair creature—*Ah ! c’est toute autre chose.*”

Lady Emma smiled.

“Do you really think this?—I am glad you think so favourably of him.—It is what I cannot help feeling — I was afraid partiality might blind me.”

*Lady Faulconer*—Your partiality is a proof

of the justice of what I say. A child that could win himself such a place in your heart, must be a gifted boy.

*Lady Emma* (sighing, and covering her face with her hand for a moment)—Perhaps—yes—true—

After a little pause in which both seemed engaged in watching the children, and during which Imogene had started up, and gone to where Eugene stood, and seemed to be endeavouring to persuade him to something, Lady Faulconer took up the ball again, by saying, with a very meaning smile—

“I thought he would not be left long to tear those rose leaves,—frankly,”—After a little appearance of hesitation, she went on—“I should think him, young as he is, a dangerous house companion for *my* girls. It is curious how early attachments—the most deep-rooted—may be formed: I have seen hundreds of instances. It is my maxim, that parents are scarcely ever sufficiently upon their guard in such cases.”

Lady Emma gave one bright glance at her, but said nothing.

Lady Faulconer went on—"Seriously, do you not think it a little perilous, when two such remarkable young things are thrown into such very close communication? An attachment seems almost inevitable."

*Lady Emma* (impetuously)—"God grant it—I mean—I mean—correcting herself—I don't see any great danger of it, nor any particular harm in it.—He is the son of a very distinguished man—what his expectations as to money may be is uncertain; but, surely, *she* has enough for both.

"Oh!" said Lady Faulconer—"I have done. That is a very generous way of viewing the subject,—and, indeed, I hope you will forgive me—I may have appeared officious—but the bystander you know. . . . And really it was so obvious to me what was already going on, that I could not shut my eyes to the probability—nay, almost certainty, of future consequences; and as a friend—or, at least, I

may say, one deeply interested in what concerns Lady Emma, and that sweet little girl—I felt it a sort of duty—you know I have the character of being a sad suspicious person—but I *have* seen a little of the world . . . but now I think I understand Lady Emma's tactics—and I must say, I think them as wise as they are disinterested.—One knows the miserable uncertainty that attends the fate of heiresses.—The difficulty of their choice, from the impossibility of feeling assured of disinterested affection upon the part of their suitors. The most estimable, are too often, from the delicacy of a noble nature, withheld from putting forward their claims—whilst the less worthy rush forward, and carry off the prize.—You wish, I suspect, to secure an early, and, therefore, certainly a disinterested attachment for your daughter.—I see it all.—The scheme is as delicately beautiful as it is wise.”

*Lady Emma* (looking excessively gratified)—  
And you really, and in sincerity, think there is a probability of success.

*Lady Faulconer*—No one can see them together for ever so short a time without feeling sure of it—and it was this impression, so forcibly made upon my mind, which almost constrained me to speak.—I know, when a person sees the object every day, one is often as much deceived with respect to the increase of an attachment of this nature, as the increase in stature—‘As one cannot discern the finger moving on the dial plate.’—Your La’aship will think I am becoming a regular blue, with my quotations this morning.

Lady Emma fixed her eyes upon the two who are still together at the foot of the flower vase.—Imogene seems soliciting,—Eugene retreating—at last she playfully takes hold of his hand, and tries to pull him along.

“Do you see?” asked Lady Faulconer.

“Come, my darlings, it is time to be getting ready to go,”—cries Lady Emma in a voice so cheerful that it scarcely sounded like her own.

“Eugene, naughty boy—what are you about? Imogene, love—what is it he won’t do?—Come and tell me what is it all about?”



Imogene flew to the window with a countenance all gladdened by her mother's manner.

“Dear Mamma! it's only that he's got one of his sorrow fits on—and then I'm so sorry—I wish he wouldn't—I wish he could be as happy as we are.”

“But that he can't, you know, my darling!—But you will try to comfort him—won't you—Come, Eugene, dear, shake it off—and, young ladies, get your things on—the carriages will be at the door in two minutes.”

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Lady Emma seemed quite a changed creature.—Her reserve and sadness were gone.—She was sweet and animated, as she must have been in her better days;—all cordiality to Lady Faulconer and Lady Ulick;—all affection to Imogene;—all complacency to us young people;—and delight itself, shone in her eyes when she spoke to, or looked at

Eugene.—In such a mood she was quite charming, and one understood all the powers of fascination, for which she had been once so celebrated.

Even Mr. Glenroy seemed to feel the influence, in spite of himself. Altogether, this was a very cheerful and happy day, and we might have thanked Lady Faulconer as the good "genius" who had inspired it—if we had any of us been aware of what had passed.

One little incident which occurred before we started, perhaps, cast a slight shade over Albert's enjoyment; but he consoled himself with thinking he would make himself amends on the morrow, and with the delight of being assured of one other day at Haughton.

He and I were standing alone in the hall together, waiting for the others to come down. Lady Faulconer was the first that appeared—she came up to Albert—

"Now, my dear Albert, I have one little thing to mention to you. Don't be vexed,

dear boy—but you must take care not to put yourself too forward, and engage Imogene too much to-day—you know she in a manner belongs to the public, and appears as a very prominent personage. I am sure, my sweet boy will see the propriety of resisting the temptation of being her cavalier, and the good taste of keeping himself a little upon the reserve. He would not like it to be thought that he was courting observation, by putting himself *en evidence* in this way. ‘A word to the wise is enough,’—gently patting the proud cheek that was now the colour of crimson.

And she turned away.

And so did he, with his haughty heart swelling till you could see the heaving of his bosom. His cheek glowing, his eye darkening—he seemed engaged in looking at a picture of Bacchus in his car drawn by tigers, and surrounded by nymphs and Bacchanals, till he was summoned by a general exclamation to the carriages.

I felt for him truly, deeply—yet I dared not show the slightest sympathy. I knew that nothing would offend him so much as the idea that his feelings were understood—yet his nature was so ingenuous, that you might read them as through crystal.

In the disposition of the carriages, Lady Faulconer's sociable was assigned to us young people.

“There, Albert, is your place!” cried Imogene, joyfully.

But he did not seem to hear her—he jumped up upon the box.

“What things boys are!” observed Lady Faulconer to Lady Emma, carelessly—“I believe that son of mine would prefer the chance of ‘handling the ribbons’ to a seat by the loveliest girl in England. There seems a natural understanding between horse and boy—and a natural antipathy between girl and boy.”

Imogene looked a little disappointed, I thought, but she soon forgot it; for the day

was fine, and the sky was blue, and her mother had seemed so pleased with her. It was to be such a happy day! and Eugene sat opposite to her, and had quite recovered his good humour, and he and I made the three girls laugh with our stupid jokes; we were in such spirits, we were all ready to laugh at anything. But proud Albert never once turned his head to look into the carriage. He had persuaded the coachman—for a pair of the Haughton Hall horses had been put into the carriage—he had persuaded the coachman to give him the reins, and he seemed too busy driving to care for anything else.

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How much may be done by well-directed efforts, persisted in for four years!

People complain how difficult it is to do good—how ungrateful the soil! How slow the returns to those who labour for the improvement of their fellow-creatures! Let no one say so, now.

In spite of the unaccountable increase in our criminal proportional returns, the spirit of our armies alone, contrasted with what it was when such multitudes were brought together forty years ago, is a triumphant proof of what has been achieved for the masses by the efforts of those blessed ones, who have laboured, through good report and evil report, in this good cause.

The Armidale of to-day was not in the least like the Armidale that Imogene had been carried to see at the opening of this story.

Mr. Glenroy's endeavours to improve the condition of this population, which he found in so degraded and neglected a state, had been unremitting. He had taken equal care to make the little girl, whom he had in charge, follow and take interest in every step he took; thus cultivating what he thought the most essential part of the education of their future mistress, whilst providing for the present well-being of her dependants.

Light and air, were here, as he conceived, the

first elements of improvement—for of another equally, if not still more necessary—namely, water, the pumping from the mines afforded an abundant supply.

In the murky, smoky, dense, oppressive atmosphere, which hung like an evil influence over the whole district of Armidale, into which the huge chimneys were incessantly pouring forth volumes upon volumes of thick black smoke—what soul could breathe forth in health or freedom.

Such an atmosphere, though it does not destroy—nay, for aught I know, not even shorten life, or produce positive disease, yet sits like a heavy night-mare on the springs of being—a sort of obscure palsy—diminishing the strength—obstructing, like a dead weight, the nerve of exertion—dulling and stupifying the faculties—lowering the spirits—and reducing man to seek his relaxation and pleasure either in the indulgence of the grossest indolence, or in the ruinous excitement of spirituous liquors—an excitement in which

both men and women indulge to a dreadful degree. Not to mention the still more pernicious indulgence of unlawful love—the bane and destruction of the younger members of such societies.

Light and air! But how to be obtained with these ceaseless volcanoes belching forth their noxious volumes of smoke every hour both of night and day.

Very simply.—By only going to the trifling trouble, or not very heavy expense, of making them consume their own smoke.

Then the blue vault of heaven—which is to man like the image of his Creator—‘the blue of heaven in his clearness’—was again revealed to the eye of these people.

The black regions of Tartarus were exchanged, not, it is true, for Elysian fields—but for the pure wholesome breath of the upper air—and the first condition was fulfilled, in order that, from fiends, they might become men.

A few months spent in a clear atmosphere;



relieved from this everlasting smoke, and its sooty deposits, sufficed in itself, to produce a wonderful change for the better in the population.

People began to breathe—people began to enjoy. A fine day—a bright sun—which had never reached them before, now called them forth to disport themselves out of doors—To take pleasure in the charms of nature—To stroll over hills where green leaves were beginning to look really green ;—where flowers began to peep and gladden the fresh air ;—where the dingy, sooty hue of a dreary darksome nature—in perpetual mourning—was exchanged for her lovely, smiling, variety of tint and hue.—The wild plants seemed, as much as man, to inhale the pure air with a sort of rapture, and put forth all their thousand lungs of leaves to drink it in.

Then followed domiciliary visits—strict and searching. Excesssively unpopular they were, but excessively necessary, if any permanent good was to be done.

And this was the only part of the reform, in

which the little Moggie was not carried to assist.

She had been shown, and had clapped her hands with delight, at every change in a great chimney, which had made it cease to belch forth its columns of black smoke ; and she was now taken to see the houses, when they were brought into proper order. She had been allowed to witness a few scenes of squalor and misery, to impress the contrast upon her heart,—but the details, she was too young to be permitted even to understand. In brief, houses were inspected ; a certain amount of chamber room insisted upon, and, where wanted, provided. The pernicious practice of crowding the family, when a house afforded accommodation sufficient for all—by taking in lodgers, was absolutely forbidden ;—whitewashing, which is to a dwelling, what godliness is to the heart, was demanded as an indispensable condition of tenancy.—Windows, once put in repair, were, by strict measures of government, kept so. Even gardening—gardening, that element of

happiness and right doing among the people, began to prevail, till it became almost universal in Armidale,—where, until lately, not the least trace of it was to be seen. Flower shows were established—prizes given—The auriculas and carnations of Armidale, began to be celebrated; and the desert blossomed like a rose. The delight with which the child had taken part in these improvements, is indescribable. It was, as I said, an education in itself, and the best of educations. It had developed, to their full extent, the natural sympathy, generosity, love, and goodness, which belonged to her character. They had bloomed out into the fullness of beauty, like the auriculas and carnations of the Armidale gardens.

And now, as we approached the place, she was all eagerness and animation.

“Is it not beautiful?—But, oh! you should have seen it, Mr. Lenham, when *I* did—I was a very little thing, then—All was as black, as black, and thick, and dark!—you never could see the sky—never.—And the houses so

horrid!—as if they had been up the chimney; the windows, stuffed with rags and paper!—and not a flower or a green tree to be seen!—And the men and women looking so dreadful—I was so frightened at them, I remember—I hardly thought they could be men and women.”—laughing,—“till Mr. Glenroy taught me better, and made me speak to them.—Oh! it *was* so different! and then, instead of being afraid of them, he made me so sorry for them—and now, just look!—Those tall chimneys! do you see? Not an atom of smoke! and it used to come out *pouring*,—and look at the houses—and the gardens!—do you see the gardens?—Oh! ain’t they pretty—and porches to many of the doors, do you see,—with roses and honeysuckles.—Oh, Albert! Albert!” starting up—“Can you do nothing but *drive*—don’t you see?—don’t you see?”

He turned round then and gave her such a smile;—A dubious smile—yet so sweet!

“Is this all your doing?”

“ Mine ! ”—laughing again—“ Oh !—no, no, no—sure not—all Mr. Glenroy’s doing—but he lets me help.—Oh yes ! he lets me help—Isn’t it nice ; isn’t it wonderful ?—You saw it, Albert, years ago, you told me so—you wouldn’t know it now, would you ?—But isn’t Mr. Glenroy a clever man ?—And isn’t he a good man ? and isn’t he a dear man ?—Oh ! I do so love him ! ”

And she sank back into her seat again.

But Albert resigned the reins to the coachman, and turned and leaned back over towards the carriage, and took part in the conversation.

Eugene all this time was perfectly silent.—He scarcely looked round at the scene through which we were passing.—He showed no sympathy with the rapture and delight of Imogene.

Was he curious ? Or was he indifferent ?

I saw Imogene look at him, and a shade like a fleeting April cloud, passed over her joyous countenance.—

She stooped down and laid her hand upon his.

“What is the matter, Eugene?—Does anything vex you?”

He made no answer, but turned away a little sulkily, as I thought.

“Now don’t have one of your naughty black fits, to-day, Eugene,—*just* to-day,”—said she almost beseechingly,—“everybody is to be happy—you must be happy,”—giving him a little friendly shake.—“Dear Eugene—won’t you be happy for *my* sake?—Won’t you, Eugene?” bending her sweet face close to his.

He looked up, smiled and laughed—but said nothing.

“Ah! that’s right—darling Eugene,” cried she, reseating herself, all joy and sunshine again.

When the carriage stopped, a footman from that in which Lady Emma, Lady Faulconer, and Lord and Lady Ulick were seated, came up to ours, and addressing Albert, said—

“Mr. Faulconer,—if you please—Lady Faulconer wishes to speak to you immediately.”

Somewhat unwillingly he descended from the box, and looked at me, shrugging his shoulders slightly ;—but in a manner I understood. And such slight indications were the only proofs of dissatisfaction at his mother’s proceedings in which he allowed himself.

However, gone he was ;—and I saw, or fancied I saw, Imogene look about, and seem disappointed that he did not return. However, after a few stoppages and interruptions from an immense crowd that filled the long straggling street of Armidale proper, we stopped at last at the place where we were to alight.

The street, if street it may be called, was crowded with people of all sizes, sorts, and ages.—All were neatly dressed, and all looking bright and wholesome, and as folks should do on a holiday. Lord Dudley said of Walter Scott, in the time of his misfortunes—‘Let every one who has had two days of pleasure

from his writings, give him a sixpence, and he will be as rich as Rothschild.'

If every happy creature here had thrown some testimony of his enjoyment, to form a heap, what a sum would have been accumulated.—What happiness before, on the day, and after the day, does a good, well-managed feast occasion.

Where we stopped was at the door of the school-house,—a large building, consisting of many spacious rooms, placed a little apart from the street, upon the very summit of a knoll or spur of the lofty range of hills which surrounded Armidale; and up one of which the village, or rather town, ran, and which we had been for the last quarter of an hour ascending.

The school-house was a handsome, but not a fanciful building. The health of the inmates had not been sacrificed to the absurd imitation of Elizabethan windows, made—not, perhaps, to exclude the light, though certainly not particularly favourable to its admission—but by their



construction rendering it impossible to admit any abundance of air. Air!—vital air!—the very spring and fountain of healthy existence; more especially for children,—and the want, a defect more especially grievous in children's apartments; for I have been warned by a medical authority it is impossible to dispute, that children spoil the air of an apartment much more rapidly than grown persons.

No,—the windows were those dear old sensible casement windows in which my soul delighteth. Opening outwards, fastened by what, in north country language, is called a stanchion. A light bar with a hook, fastened with a ring into the casement, and so contrived that the window can be opened as little, or as much as is desired until it falls back level with the wall, and lets in pure and sweet blowing air the whole breadth of the frame.

These windows looked as seemly as they were wholesome.

The school-house was surrounded with a large green for play-ground—and a *green*, since

the annihilation of the smoke, it really was—and behind it, separated by a certain breadth of plantation, so that the little and the great community might not be within hearing, sight, or distinct hearing of each other, was the men's *play-ground*—a place of still more value in assisting the education and well-being of the community, than even the children's.

For education never does, or never ought to cease whilst this life lasts. Is it not the anti-chamber to an endless vista? And men require the means of improvement, as well as children—for, be he who he may, magnate or peasant, collier or prince, the human being who is not advancing is inevitably deteriorating.

Exercise and enjoyment out of doors—healthy play for the young men—shade and benches—quiet and reading for the older were provided here.

‘The young contending, whilst the old surveyed.’

Sweet Auburn!—Why is the attempt not

oftener made to realize that most lovely picture?

There was a bowling green—an archery ground and butts for those who liked bows and arrows. There were leaping poles—masts for climbing—everything that could further gymnastic exercises. The place was surrounded by a screen of young plantations, which even in these few years already gave a certain shade; for the quickest-growing trees had been judiciously mingled with the more valuable ones of slower growth. By the side of, we must say, rather than under these, were benches, and small tables—and, here and there, an arbour, covered with honeysuckle, and eglantine, and clematis, now in full sweetness and flower. At one end of the area was a house, or rather sort of shed, for entertainment. There, tea, and coffee, and cocoa—and bread-and-butter, and cakes and gingerbread were to be had.

But this was no truck shop. Any approach to such system was sedulously avoided at Armidale, as at present managed. The un-

dertaking was a private one, permitted and encouraged upon the condition that no spirituous liquors whatever should at that place be sold. I observed, however, there was at this time of the year a very refreshing and pleasant-looking array of sherbets—a cheap and delicious luxury to those for whom ices are dreams of fairy land.

Gay flags were now waving at the corners of the areas,—from the roof of the house of entertainment—from the masts and poles. The sun shone bright in a blue, unclouded sky—all nature seemed to sympathize in the gladness of the hour.

It was the most exhilarating scene I ever witnessed.

## CHAPTER V.

And so they say that he was one,  
Not made for love, but fear—  
A cold, stern man that stood alone :  
All this I smile to hear.—*Deeds of Wellington.*  
W. C. BENNETT.

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WE stopped, then, at the school-house.

Mr. Glenroy and Mr. Elmsley, who had preceded us, were accompanied by the stewards of the feast, with white rods in their hands, and a blue ribbon across their breasts. They were selected from among the workmen most remarkable for their superior good conduct and good order.—This, be it said, *en passant*, had been done through the medium of a ballot by the workmen themselves. They chose from a list of names set down by the foreman of the works. The stewards, modestly proud of their dignity,

followed the two gentlemen, to receive the Queen of the day.

Mr. Glenroy gave her his hand, and she descended the first from the carriage ; but as she did so, she turned round and bade Eugene come with her—in spite of an attempt upon Mr. Glenroy's part to prevent her.—The boy, however, did not choose to obey, but offered his arm to Laura ; I took Charlotte ; and thus we followed the little Lady of Haughton.

As I did so, I looked round for poor Albert.—Wretched boy ! he was between his mother and Lady Emma—fast locked, arm-in-arm—looking with longing eyes at the young party. But his mother had him fast, and kept him so. For, even after they entered the room, she kept leaning upon her son's arm, and effectually prevented his joining our party.

I am not going to inflict upon you a detailed account of the dinner ; and yet it was a scene to remember.—Three long tables, reaching from one end of this very large apartment to the other—the one for men—two others for the

women and children.—This arrangement appeared to me a little whimsical ; but when I saw the flaunting apologies for caps ; or, worse than that, the hair dressed in an attempt at imitation of the last mode, without caps—and the very coquettish looks of some of the younger ladies,—I thought, perhaps, it was as well. The elder men were evidently much happier for not having the women to play civil to—as happy, in short, as Englishmen of the old school were wont to be, when the ladies withdrew after dinner.

The dinner was, in general, plain, though extremely well-dressed—yet, I remarked, not without some surprise, that there was a mixture of French dishes—omelettes, for instance. Great pains had been taken to inspire a taste for rearing poultry—and the manufacture of this ready and most wholesome luxury of the omelette was being introduced.

Then the use our neighbours made of vegetables was not forgotten.—Capital *pots au feu*—or, rather, *olla podridas*, of which the vege-

tables furnished more than half the material, were introduced in huge tureens among the other dishes.—Salads—*magnonnaises* even—another cheap luxury where there is cold meat, or even a red herring, to be had.—Vegetables dressed in various ways —In short, the attempt had been here made to introduce sundry improvements in that art which man never will, and woman never ought, to despise ; and, in this way, correct the wasteful management of his more plenteous means of feeding himself, which characterises John Bull, and disgraces his wife.

Will you believe it, there actually was a French cook at Armidale?—Not quite such a one as Lord Sefton's, but one who understood all the more ordinary parts of his art perfectly.

Mr. Glenroy thought, and had taught Imogene to think, that it was of still more importance to provide how the table of her dependants, than how the table of Haughton Hall should be served ;—not that he wished her to



grow up indifferent to that portion of her duties. To the pursuit of everything that was gracious, lovely, or of good report, it was his ambition to train—

‘A perfect woman nobly plann’d.’

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Imogene sat at the head of the children’s table, with Eugene by her side, for so she would have it—the only little piece of obstinate resistance that she made to Mr. Glenroy—but here she was obstinate, for she knew it pleased her mother.

Lady Emma took her seat at the head of the women’s table, Mr. Glenroy presided over that of the men.

Poor Albert, still hooked to his mother, walked about, but she seemed only interested in what was going on at the men and women’s tables. She never once approached that of the children; Lord and Lady Ulick, Charlotte, Laura, and myself, seemed fascinated there, we took so much interest in watching the

proceedings of the little mistress of the revels.

When dinner was ended, speeches began. The men drank Miss Aubrey's health first of all—upon which Mr. Glenroy fetched the little lady from her own table, and holding her by the hand at the head of that of the men, to my astonishment, the young creature, without embarrassment or hesitation, but just as if it was, the simplest thing in the world, made her little oration,—merely thanking them, and saying she was very glad to see them; but the softness of her young silver-toned voice, the sweetness and kindness of her countenance, an untutored grace in every gesture and action, gave an infinite charm to those few words. There was a general buzz of approbation and affectionate admiration down the two first tables, whilst the children clambered upon the benches where they were sitting, to see her, so especially interesting to them, and clapped their hands.

I have always observed the pleasure with

which people of the lower orders attach themselves to the children of those above them. It is with a genuine love and interest, they rarely can be brought to feel for the superiors of their own standing. The helplessness of children establishes a species of equality. None of the base family of envious and jealous feelings, find place. Where there is a sentiment of protection to the feeble in age and strength, it satisfies numerous little susceptibilities which exist among the lower orders, whether we choose to acknowledge the fact or not.

“Only look at her,” whispered the women to each other; “Did’st ever see such a perfect darling?” Whilst the men gazed, as upon something more rare and precious than the Koh-i-noor itself.

Whilst Imogene was still standing with her hand in his, Mr. Glenroy addressed the meeting in a regular speech—a very good one—plain, sensible, reasonable—such as men and women love. Not lowered to their capacity,

as if they were children themselves, only purified from certain words and turns of language, unintelligible to those who have not received a regular education, but which it is not the slightest impeachment of their natural abilities to find so. Hard-headed, sensible men, were around him, women shrewd, sharp, and as knowing in the world as any French *Marquise* that ever flashed out her brilliant sayings in an assembly of wits.

In good, plain, pointed Saxon, Mr. Glenroy addressed them, and they entered heartily into every word that he uttered.

After these ceremonies were ended, the united company adjourned to the playing grounds.

It was a pleasant sight to see men, women, and children streaming out upon this glorious August day. No longer a troop of lean, unwashed artificers; but a well-dressed, well-washed, healthy, vigorous-looking set. All plumed for enjoyment. The children were soon shouting, laughing, and scouring about;

the men sauntering under the trees, or engaged at various games of skill or activity; the women walking or sitting in groups, indulging in that first of female pleasures—gossip.

We left them to themselves now, it being thought that so they would best amuse themselves; and Mr. Elmsley, coming up to us, proposed to his two pupils that we should ascend the slope of the hill, or almost mountain, at the back of the play-grounds, to enjoy the prospect.

“You have never been there, Miss Aubrey,” said he; “and I think from no situation can you, or others, form so just an estimate of what you have done.”

“I have done! Oh, Mr. Elmsley! How can you talk thus?”

“Well—*has* been done,” said he, correcting himself, with a quiet smile. “But if you did not do it, no one more rejoices that it has been done—Will you not go? It is a pleasant prospect, I assure you.”

“But will it not hurt your chest, Mr.

Elmsley? You know it hurts you even to walk up stairs. We can find our way by ourselves, I dare say."

"It is a great pleasure to me to look down from that spot—and the ascent is not so *very* steep."

"Eugene, will you go? Mr. Lenham?—Where is Albert? and Mamma—where is Mamma? We had better ask Mamma."

"She was a little overdone with the heat," said Mr. Elmsley. "Mr. Glenroy's carriage is ordered out; and she is going back to Haughton in it. She prefers the close carriage."

Imogene, upon this intelligence, was like a bird, spreading its white wings to fly away; but Lord Ulick stopped her.

"Nothing on earth the matter, Moggie, except a little lady-sick of roast meat and sweet puddings. Lady Faulconer has been so good as to go with her, and they are off by this time. Where did you say, Mr. Elmsley? This way? Come, Moggie of my heart."

But Imogene stopped, hesitated, seemed unwilling to proceed—looked back.

“What *are* you waiting for?” Eugene said, impatiently. “Are we to go and see this fine sight, or are we not?”

“Albert! Where’s Albert?”

“Oh! it’s Albert you’re waiting for. To be sure—of course.”

“He’s had no pleasure all day, I am sure,” said Imogene, positively; “and I won’t go without him.”

At this moment, Albert, red as a full blown rose with heat and impatience, was seen flying up the path.

“Oh! here you come at last!” was Eugene’s salutation. “I’m sure I’m glad of it, for here’s Imogene vows we shall all stand here waiting for you, if we wait till doomsday. I wish, when people come out a pleasuring, they could keep together,” he muttered, or something of that sort, for he, for some reason or other, was thoroughly out of humour this day.

But the face of Albert brightened, as with a glory, at this speech.

“Did you?—did she?” he panted out, and

was by Imogene's side in a moment. Young things of that age don't use to take arms, but he never left her side again that day, and seemed neither to see nor hear any one else.

She, upon her side, looked happy and content, now all was right; but she was more than ever kind and attentive to Eugene—almost provokingly so. It seemed to lower her, in a certain sense, to lavish so much solicitous good-nature where it was but very ungraciously received. Eugene grew more and more sulky as the day went on, till poor Imogene was quite disconcerted.

“Why don't you leave that fellow to himself,”—at length Albert, quite provoked, ventured to say—

“Oh! I cannot—I must not—Mamma would not be pleased. Mamma is so right. We ought never to forget—He is not like us, who are so happy.”

“If a fellow's not happy when you are so kind to him, I don't see what's to make him happy,” was Albert's reply, with school-boy bluntness.



“Oh, dear! How little I can do!” she answered, with simplicity. “He does not care enough for what I do. Poor boy! How can he help it? I may be like a sister—but I’m not *even* a sister—and he wants a great deal more than that, poor boy.”

The view from the spot to which Mr. Elmsley led us was as beautiful and interesting as it was extensive.

The craggy, wild hills, interspersed with broken rocks, where the stone had pierced through the upper soil—sometimes in huge rough masses—sometimes in precipitous faces—interspersed with knots of heath, gorse, rough grass, and broom—and, here and there, a straggling wild rose, honeysuckle, or thorn, rose in various heights, peaks, and knolls, upon all sides. At our feet lay the busy, peopled valley, which, rising into a hill itself in the centre, penetrated through the range. The various forms of its factories, machinery, and dwelling-houses, interspersed with gardens, were broken fantastically by the rugged ground upon which it was situated.

The sky was clear of smoke; a light blue eddy, rising from one place or another, was alone visible, and added to, rather than diminished, the beauty of the scene—upon which the sun, now declining behind the opposite hills, threw a glory, heightened by the deep shadow into which a portion of the valley was already falling.

The hum of happy voices rose cheerfully from the play-ground. The larks sprang skyward from the turf, and thrilled their song in the air. The hum of insects came blended with the distant lowing of herds from below—all those sweet rural sounds, which, mingled, are so harmonious to the human ear.

It was a scene to rejoice the heart, indeed.

Holding Mr. Glenroy's hand—for he had now joined us—Imogene, her countenance filled with an earnest seriousness, remained in perfect silence surveying the prospect before her. Mr. Glenroy's face was filled with a deep, but grave satisfaction, which brightened into one of those passing gleams which at

times rendered his harsh features almost beautiful, as little Imogene, pulling him gently down towards her by the hand she held, whispered—

“What a good and clever man you are, *dear* Mr. Glenroy!”

“My pretty Imogene,” he said, “it has pleased the Almighty that I should begin—what I am sure you will perfect and maintain. Child!—you will never forget that *your* first duty is to these poor people.”

“Never!”—she said, fervently.

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The serious mood was now broken up. Mr. Glenroy, whose presence diffused a certain awe amongst us, wandered away. Perhaps he was conscious of the effect he produced in checking the flow of our young spirits; so Albert and Imogene returned to the school-house, laughing, and chatting, and fooling, as young things, after a fit of gravity and good be-

haviour, are apt to do. For once, she seemed to forget that Eugene was sulky, and to enjoy the day, the scene, the happy reflections, and, above all, the ride home, to perfection.

I insisted upon taking my turn upon the box. —Albert went inside the carriage, and I heard his and her merry voices, mingled with those of Charlotte and Laura,—but sounding far happier than theirs—for Charlotte was *not* one very much to enjoy a scene in which she played so insignificant a part; and Laura, who was not very strong, seemed drowsy with fatigue.

As for Eugene, ensconced in a corner of the carriage, he appeared fast asleep; and when Albert would have made some joke at his expense, Imogene, ever prompt to interfere in favour of her friend, whispered—

“Don’t, Albert—don’t—He is sooner tired than we are, poor boy—You know he’s not *all* English.—He is made of China clay—and we are made of common clay, Mamma says;—and I am sure he is so beautiful, that it seems true.”

“Oh ! you think him so beautiful !—I hate that sort of beauty.”

“Nay, but he is really *quite* beautiful. Everybody says so ;—but I don’t care about people being beautiful, myself,” she added.

## CHAPTER VI.

Oh, Brutus ! thou art yoked with a lamb,  
That carrieth anger, as the flint bears fire.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

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I THINK I will spare you the feast given by Albert and Imogene, the next day.

It was but a repetition of similar scenes of boyish gallantry, boyish jealousy, and boyish indulgence of temper.

The two givers of the entertainment had agreed, that instead of bought cakes, which Imogene merrily laughed at herself for having been so childish as to propose, the money should be spent in prizes for a lottery, and the housekeeper should be allowed to supply the cakes. So the sociable was ordered after

breakfast, and entrusted to the guardianship of Imogene's nurse,—who still retained her place in the establishment,—we set out for Littleton.

And there was much secret conference between Albert and Imogene ;—for no one was to know or be consulted as to the selection made, but Eugene. Imogene would not allow him to be left out. Eugene, however, ungraciously said he didn't want to know,—he didn't care about it—or whether he got a prize at all—or what,—and seemed trying to throw a damp upon the whole business ;—but it was not to be damped. Imogene was too happy in the idea of her lottery, *all prizes*, and too busy consulting with Albert, to perceive his ill-humour ; and he, accustomed to be *ah-pooored* and petted whenever it pleased him to look miserable,—was more out of sorts than ever.

He would evidently have been very rude to Albert, if he had dared ;—but there was that in Albert's eye, which nobody quite liked to rouse ;—so he revenged himself upon Charlotte

and Laura, by repulsing all their attempts to amuse and please him, in which they were unwearied. For my part, I was so provoked, that I took up an almost unjust aversion against him ;—which bit of temper must be allowed for, in the colouring of these, my insignificant pages.

Lady Emma was not well. Her health, indeed, was much shaken by what she had gone through, and the constant and restless uneasiness of her mind, prevented her recovering strength. Lady Faulconer, who was becoming quite a favourite, remained with her. The day was so hot, that neither of the ladies would venture even upon a walk to the grotto, where the entertainment was to be held.

I thought Lady Faulconer rather exaggerated the heat, and consequent fatigue of the enterprise, and seemed to dislike going so much herself, that I thought it was politeness, as much as inclination, which determined Lady Emma to remain in the house. Lady Faulconer had reminded Lord and Lady Ulick



of a visit they had to pay in the neighbourhood, and had advised them to postpone their excursion till the cool of the evening; so accidentally, or by design, on her part, we had the day to ourselves—I thought this at the time, a good-natured, as well as a sensible arrangement, on the part of Lady Faulconer; and proving how well she, who seemed to understand everything, and everybody, understood young people of our age. Afterwards I learned to understand her real tactics better. We were very merry and happy. Imogene, after a *tête à tête* walk of about half an hour with Eugene, succeeded in bringing him back, apparently in a better temper; and I made Albert equally content, by undesignedly remarking upon the divine goodness of Imogene, who, it was impossible, could really like such a surly chap.

In brief, the lottery was drawn,—and there, Albert won the little locket in the shape of a heart, which he wore round his neck from that day forward; poor fellow, to his dying hour.

I was witness to a little scene between Albert and Imogene. The day as, I said, had been extremely hot; but it was now tending to a close. Sweet evening was coming on—the sun declining gloriously over the far-extended landscape—gleaming upon solitary meres; purpling the distant mountains, and casting long shadows upon the grass, from the noble trees that overhung the grotto. At the entrance to this grotto, Imogene and Albert were seated upon the turf.

Eugene, who seemed never to choose to be long absent from her side, had flung himself upon the grass near her; his face to the ground, and his arms folded over his head, and had fallen asleep; for what Imogene had said of him was true, he was of a more susceptible, and delicate *texture*, than we English boys, and much more sensible to fatigue, either of body or mind.

I sat a little before the two. Charlotte and Laura were reposing upon the benches inside the grotto. Every one seemed languid and

tired, for we had been all much excited, and very merry over our lottery.

Albert was holding the little golden heart which he had won in his hand. Now contemplating that, now looking over the beautiful expanse of landscape spread before him. He was unusually silent—Imogene was silent, too.

Her eyes were fixed upon the scene before her, then raised to the blue vault above her head—searching, as it were, searching for the great Author of all this magnificence, and meditating, in a manner remarkable for a girl of her age, but not without precedent.

The subject of her thoughts appeared in the evening.

She was so deep in her reflections, that she started like one awakened from a dream, when Albert, with a slight sigh, said—

“What a happy visit this has been.”

“Has it?” she answered.—“I am so glad—I am so glad that *you*, Albert, enjoyed it.—I am afraid the rest found it dull, yesterday—I suppose people don’t care much about such

things if they don't know and love people ; I feel as if I loved all those people so, because I *do* know them ; and it is such a pleasure to see them happy—I am glad you felt so, too, Albert.”

“ Yes,” said he, “ I was glad enough to see such a number of folk enjoying themselves ; but it was not quite *that*, I believe.—Yet I do envy you, Imogene—I wish we had something of the sort at Drystoke ; but my father is not that kind of man,—and my mother has so much to do—I suppose people can't help being as they were made—but I wish we had a Mr. Glenroy to come amongst *us*.”

“ Ah, Mr. Glenroy !—I am so glad you like Mr. Glenroy—and, do you know, Albert, he likes you ? I heard him say to Mr. Elmsley, whilst I had hold of his hand—Mr. Glenroy's hand I mean—that you were one of the finest boys he had seen for many a day, though you were an Eton fellow ; and, that if Eton turned out many such lads, he should begin to think better of its pedantic longs and shorts.”

Albert laughed.

“I am afraid I have not done very gloriously in the long and short line. If he had said cricket, he'd have been nearer the mark.—*That* has been the making of me. But I am glad I found favour in the terrible old gentleman's eyes; for, do you know, Imogene, though he looks very stern and formidable, there's something about him that I feel I could like almost as much as you do—he's such a *man*.”

“And he's such a good and kind man. Do you know, Albert, I am just in this way—I love what is manly, like you, the first and best of anything. I like to be a little afraid of a man—I don't like to be afraid of a woman, though . . . and then, when one's a little afraid, it comes so sweet and nice to feel loving him for his kindness, and his wiseness, and his goodness, till one quite forgets to be afraid.”

“I wish I could make you afraid of *me*,” was the reply, as he turned the little golden heart about in his hand, his eyes being fixed upon it

“Oh!” cried she, “you’re a boy—one mustn’t be afraid of boys,—but I dare say if I saw you in a passion, or angry, I should be afraid of you—that is,” correcting herself, “if it were in a just cause; for I always laugh at people when they are angry without just cause—almost always,” she added, for she thought, just at that moment, of her mother, and how painful *her* displeasure was even when she could not always acknowledge its justice.

“Are you afraid of Eugene?” asked Albert. She laughed.

“Afraid of him!—No—no—and yet—yes I am. I am very much afraid of vexing him, and making him unhappy.—He is so easily made unhappy.”

“Interesting character!” said Albert.

“Well—yes—I don’t know. Don’t let us talk about him,” glancing his way—“he may wake before we are aware.”

“Oh! to be sure—let us spare his feelings by all means.”

“Albert!—Albert!—how naughty you are.”

“Am I? Because I don’t fall down and worship, and cannot help wondering why everything and person is to give way to that half-European—half-Egyptian mongrel.”

“For shame!—for shame!”

She was quite angry, and about to get up, and leave him—but he took hold of her frock.

“Don’t go—It is because you *will* spoil him that I abuse him—but don’t go, now, Imogene.”

“Then you must promise not to say a word against Eugene—for Mamma would be very much displeased if she heard you.”

“Well, then, I won’t, ever again—but Imogene—what do you think I am going to do with this little locket?—my prize.”

“Give it to Laura,”—said she.

“No, I am going to wear it myself.”

“*You* wear it!” laughing merrily—“A great boy like you!—almost a man!”

“*Quite* a man, I hope, in some things.—Yea, verily, I am going to hang it round my neck, and wear it; but then”—and he spoke so low, that none but herself could hear—I saw she coloured all over.

She shook her head.

“Do now, Imogene.—If I have *that*, it will be a talisman to me. Do you think I could do or say—hardly think—anything wrong with that so near my heart.—Come, don’t be missish and foolish—you *never* are missish—what is it after all?”—he rose, and suddenly entered the grotto, returning almost immediately. A pair of scissors were in his hand—he took up one of the long curls which fell upon her shoulders, severed a tiny portion, put it into his locket, that into his waistcoat pocket, and no more was said.

Imogene rose from her seat, and proposed a return to the house. We roused the sleeping Eugene, and the listless young ladies, and sauntered together homewards—but Albert lingered behind. He did not seem inclined to



enter into our idle talk : he was thoughtful and absent, as I had never seen him before.

In the relation of this story I put down what I had an opportunity of observing myself, and I have helped it out with information, obtained, as I could, from other sources. You must not quarrel, if you can help it, with this somewhat doubtful method.

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Lady Emma, languid and out of spirits, struggling in vain against her secret dissatisfaction at the events of the day before, lay upon a couch in her dressing-room.

Her nerves, as I have said, were so weakened by all she had suffered, that they gave way upon the slightest occasion ; and a kind of feverish anxiety to do right, under circumstances, in which, as it appeared to her, everything was false and wrong, kept her in a state of restlessness the most distressing.

Her only comfort seemed to be in the pre-

sence of Eugene, and in indulging him in every way—thus securing his happiness, as she, in her distorted view of things, thought, and compensating to him for the wrong which every day to her eyes became more apparent.

For this fact was undeniable. As is mostly the case in family resemblances, every year that passed over their heads, developed that which the children bore to their real progenitors, and strengthened, almost to a certainty, her belief upon the subject.

The sullen discontent which had clouded Eugene's brow at the feast of Armidale—the perseverance of Mr. Glenroy in bringing Imogene forward upon every occasion—had greatly distressed and irritated Lady Emma, and had ended by bringing on the nervous headache, which had forced her to return home.

In vain Lady Faulconer endeavoured by her conversation to cheer her depression. She wanted the clue to the momentous secret which weighed so constantly upon her spirits.

She felt herself at fault, and vainly beat about the bush, as the common saying is, to discover what lay hidden within.

No starting of game rewarded her efforts. Upon this matter Lady Emma was impenetrable.

Then Lady Faulconer tried to return to the subject which had appeared so successful the morning before.

She spoke of Eugene.

“But he looked so unhappy!”—Lady Emma remarked, in a desponding tone—“I can’t make him happy.”

Lady Faulconer, in her inner heart, gave a ‘pooh, pooh’ of contempt, at what she thought this unjust and unaccountable weakness upon the part of Lady Emma; but, persevering in the plan she had adopted, she said—

“He ought to be happy—for you are all excessively kind to him.”

“No—not all—Mr. Glenroy seems to me, to take a pleasure in mortifying and keeping

the poor boy back, as much as he possibly can."

"Do you think so?—I don't know—It seemed to me that it was only his anxiety to bring Imogene forward, and that was all right you know—and really it is wonderful how he has accustomed so young a creature to conduct herself.—It was beautiful, yesterday, I thought."

"Yes—she does it wonderfully well—she is a docile and clever—nay, I must say, a very good creature ; but poor Eugene."

"I don't see why *poor*," said Lady Faulconer, with a dry laugh—"his prospects, as far as one can indulge in *previsions*, are excellently good."

"Ah! if I could but think as you do!—You made me so happy, yesterday morning—but now, the prospect clouds over again.—If Imogene should, after all, not love him."

"It is as likely, and more likely that he should not love her—Men usually outlive these childish attachments—women rarely."

“Do you think there is *that* danger, too?—I never thought of that.”

“Oh, don’t be afraid—In a case like this one, men rarely *do* outlive their childish attachments.—Not the least danger of it, I can promise you, in this case—of Eugene, least of all.”

“Why, of Eugene, least of all.—You do not think him interested or selfish?—Indeed, you do him injustice.”

“Who can tell what such a child as that is—all children are selfish in their way—but no, indeed.”—observing the cloud over Lady Emma’s countenance—I really think he is a very interesting boy—(a little spoiled ill-tempered wretch)—and I repeat that Imogene thinks so, too—all her actions prove it.”

“Oh! you do me good—Oh! you do not know the load you remove from my heart, when you say this.”

Lady Faulconer smiled to herself—(what a strange infatuation—what *can* be the reason of it—something must be hidden under it—It

is perfectly unaccountable, only that she *is* the most romantic creature it ever was my lot to meet with—not like anybody else in the world.—How ridiculous all this is! )—aside—*aloud*—

“Dear Lady Emma, I told you yesterday morning, that I understood and appreciated the generosity of your motives and the wisdom of your plans—and do not be uneasy—as far as one can look forward, they will succeed.—Thus far they certainly *have* succeeded.—The two young things love one another already in a peculiar manner.—Advance of years will ripen it to a mature affection.”

“But do you think that Imogene is considerate enough of him?—His is a peculiar situation.—Always to play second, when she is made so much of, is trying to any boy of spirit. I am always speaking to her about it.”

*Lady Faulconer* — *aside* (Just the way to make her hate him)—*aloud*,—One is obliged to remind those young things of such little attentions — they are so heedless. Of course,

Imogene, amiable and generous as her temper is, must be like other girls of her age—heedless and forgetful of what is due to other people's feelings.—One must be on the watch, and constantly reminding children what is due to others—I am sure it is so with my girls—and one can see Eugene is a little sore upon the subject you mention; but, in general, I do think Imogene is very considerate.

In consequence of this conversation, and Lady Emma dwelling upon it in the morbid manner in which she was now too apt to consider any subject of interest, she looked with more than usual anxiety into Eugene's face, as, at the return from the grotto, he entered the dressing room.

“Are you come, my sweet boy?”—with an air of much gratification.—“Where are all the rest? — *You* never forget your, poor mammie.”

“I'm happiest with you,—I like being with you,”—flinging himself upon a footstool that was by her couch, and stretching himself out

at full length, with an air of weariness and disgust inexpressible.

“Are you not happy *without* me?” she asked anxiously.—“Have you not been happy this afternoon?—I thought you were all going to be so very happy.—What was amiss? Were they unkind to you?”

“I hate those Eton boys;—they think themselves such men,—and they have nothing to say.—That Albert—he’s only a great ass, after all.”

“Is he?—I thought they said he was very clever.”

“No, he isn’t.—He can only talk of cricket and horses;—I hate cricket and horses.”

“Do you?—And what does my boy like, then?”

“The wild woods, and the fields, and the fresh air, and Haughton,—I love Haughton,—and songs;—I love songs.—I should love my lessons, if that Elmsley would let me learn songs, instead of Latin verbs;—I hate Latin verbs.”



Lady Emma looked at the beautiful face, that now seemed lighted with a strange animation.—The boy, when thus excited, was transformed into something, to her, singularly interesting—he looked so like, and yet so unlike, his father, at such moments.

She yielded to a temptation which she knew she ought to have resisted, when she faintly let fall—

“Haughton!—you love Haughton?”

“Yes, *I do* love Haughton—with all my heart.”

“And you would like Haughton to be your’s, as well as Imogene’s.”

“Oh! if it were but ——”

“Well, well,—patience, dear;—when you are a little older, I will tell you something;—but don’t be afraid to love Haughton,—you ought to love Haughton.—You have a right to love Haughton;”—but she stopped herself, and turned the subject.—“Those great boys were rude and ill-natured, were they? and Imogene?”

“Oh, Imogene’s good enough ;—but, somehow, she doesn’t take the right way with me. She pets me as if I was a child.—I’m no child now—she forgets that—I can feel, and see, too, like any of them.”

“How does she behave that you don’t like? Tell me—I am sure she does not intend it.”

“I don’t know for that.—She’s so put up with those big fellows keeping her company ; she thinks herself quite a woman—and comes, or tries to come, over me when I look dull,—just as if I were a baby.—I’d rather she’d let me alone,—I hate to be babied.—I’m no baby,—no, she’s out there.—She is older—not much, though—but I’m as forward as she, when I please.—I hate her coming so kind and good to me—as if she were a princess, and I a poor beggar.—But she’s no real princess—and I am Omar Bey’s son. My father was a great man and a warrior,—her father !—oh, he was rich, but he was only an English gentleman, after all, and what’s that?—I think myself as good as her at least, any day—in spite of her Armidale.”

“And so you are—and so you are,—and I am sure she thinks so ;—I am sure she means to be kind.”

“Kind!—That’s just what I hate—kind!”

“Well, I don’t mean kind,—I mean she wishes to be everything you like, Eugene.”

“Does she?—Well, she isn’t then.”

“But what can she do?—How can she help it?”

“She shan’t come the princess over me—that’s all.”

“But she doesn’t mean it,—She cannot mean it.—Imogene is not insolent or proud.”

“Proud!” interrupted the boy, his cheek mantling, and his eye flashing—“I’d like to see her that to me.”

“No—no—she is not. But Eugene, my boy—my own dear boy—you do love Imogene—you do love Imogene—surely, you do love Imogene.”

“I don’t know whether I do or not. Sometimes I do, and sometimes I hate her. I hate her when Mr. Glenroy makes such a fuss about

her, and puts her up so—I hated her yesterday. When she’s vexed and crying, then I love her. She’s very nice and pretty when she cries. I like,” he said, standing up, “to see—grand lady as they make of her—to see that she can be vexed sometimes, as I am always being vexed. *I* never cry, now—but it makes me love her, to see *her* cry.”

“Strange being! Eugene, Eugene—I am sure you ought to love her, for she loves you—and it is not I alone that say it; Lady Faulconer is sure she loves you dearly.”

“Well, perhaps, she does. Yes, I dare say—Well, I’ll love her, if she’ll love me—but I don’t much care.”

“You don’t care!”

“No, I count for nothing here—I want my father—I want to be a great man, as I shall be when my father comes back—and he *will* come back—I know he will come at last—I know he will come at last—I’ve seen him—I dream of him. Oh! I know he will come at last—and then, Imogene will see—I’m as good

as her, though she is queen at Armidale—and then, she won't pet me like a baby—but fear me like a *man*, when I've my father's glittering sword by my side."

"Child!" cried Lady Emma, with amazement—"What is this? You rave."

But the mood was already passed; the boy had thrown himself down on the carpet, and lay with his face to the ground, covering it with his hands.

Lady Emma had not the discretion, the self-command, to let the scene end here; she resorted to the subject of Imogene, with her usual nervous restlessness.

But he would say no more. He lay there, with his face buried in his hands, and his hands buried in his torrents of fine hair.

In vain she endeavoured to renew the conversation; he was obstinately silent.

At last she desisted, and falling back upon her cushion, from which she had raised herself, sighed deeply.

At that he lifted up his head.

“Mammie—What do you sigh in that way for?”

“It makes me very unhappy—Oh, my Eugene! you cannot think how unhappy—to find that you and Imogene do not agree.”

“Agree!—Oh! we agree well enough. Only those great boys spoil her—and I won’t be treated like a baby, and I won’t be condescended to as if she were queen of the world, and I a pauper, at her gate. That’s what I don’t like, and I won’t bear.”

“But she wishes so to be all that is kind.”

“Kind!” he again exclaimed, almost fiercely, as if stung to the quick, by the word. “That’s what she shan’t be to me—she shan’t be kind—I hate people to be kind. She’s not *kind* to Albert and Lenham, and she *shan’t* be kind to me—I won’t bear it—and I wish you’d tell her so. It’s especially unbearable before other people—especially before those *boys*—I heard them muttering something of spoil’d child, this very day. Spoil’d child, and by *her*!—a child herself.

I won't bear it—You tell her so, if you will.”

“ I will tell her so—I am sure she means to do right, but she does not exactly know the best way, perhaps.”

“ If anybody's a spoiled child, I know who it is—it's herself. See what a fuss Mr. Glenroy makes about her.”

“ Mr. Glenroy is an elderly man—he has no family of his own—he loves her almost as if she were a daughter of his own, because he loved her poor father.”

“ Oh! that's not it.—One can see, plain enough, he's proud of her, because she's a great heiress, and got all these fine things about her—but I sometimes hate her when I think of it; and when she wants to come the great heiress over me, and is kind—oh, then I loathe her,” —and, springing up from the floor, with this last sentence on his lips, he left the room.

## CHAPTER VII.

And my young spirit was as free  
As is the morning wind,  
And restless as the sea,  
Unfettered, unconfined.—*The Broken Vow.*  
JOHN WILLIAM FLETCHER.

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LADY EMMA was miserable.

Something must be done to stop this new evil. It was plain that Imogene was mis-managing matters sadly. Her conscience smote her for her injustice, even whilst she indulged a certain irritation against the innocent cause of the boy's complaints.

Far—far better, had she suffered matters to take their natural course ; but this was impossible to her. She sent for Imogene.



Imogene was sitting upon the marble steps which led from the centre drawing-room window to the flower garden,—upon one side of her was Mr. Glenroy—Mr. Elmsley was standing before them.

“And what was my lassie thinking of so deeply, when we interrupted her?”

“I was thinking—Oh, Mr. Glenroy, don’t be angry—that the great, great thing of all, at Armidale, we have never done.”

“And what is it?”

“I think I know,” said Mr. Elmsley.

“Yes,” and she looked up in his face—  
“you do. It was something you said yesterday, Mr. Elmsley, that I have not been able to get out of my head.”

“Well, let us hear what it was, my bonny bairn.”

“Mr. Elmsley—you say again what you said yesterday.”

Mr. Elmsley coloured a little—for he was a most nervous and timid, though a firm and excellent man—as he said—

“I only remarked that there was great

happiness, but no proper place provided in which to return God thanks for it."

"They have their conventicles," said Mr. Glenroy, coldly, "and they like them best."

"But I want them to have a church,"—Imogene was saying, when the speech was interrupted by the appearance of Lady Emma's maid.

"Miss Aubrey—will you please to come to your Mamma?"

She started up—"Mamma—Oh, how could I forget to go to her, first."

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"Dearest Mamma! How could I be so neglectful?—Eugene has been here—Eugene never forgets—How is your head, dear Mamma—Is it better?"

"Neither do you often forget, Imogene," said Lady Emma, gently; for as far as attention to herself was concerned, she was much too sweet-tempered and generous to be jealous or exacting. It was only upon one unhappy point that she was sore and unreasonable.

“I never suspect you of indifference or unkindness to me, Imogene—I should be the most unjust of human beings if I did.—You were engaged in something or other that absorbed you for the moment—or I should not have had to send for you.”

Imogene coloured with pleasure. Such just and cordial speeches upon her mother’s part, excited a feeling of gratitude and affection which was, perhaps, increased by the pain she too often felt, from her manner at other times. And this kept alive the powerful influence which Lady Emma, in spite of all her waywardness and uncertainty, exercised over her daughter’s feelings.

“Dear Mamma,” was all she said, and came up and took her mother’s delicate, beautiful, but wasted hand, and kissed it.—“It was, indeed—and I think you will say I am right, in being anxious about it—Mr. Elmsley put it into my head—It is about having a church at Armidale . . .”

“Armidale!”—was Lady Emma’s exclama-

tion, in the tone of one wearied to death of a subject—"I thought we had done with Armidale for a day or two, at least.—You seem to think of nothing but what is to be done at Armidale—yet what can such a mere girl as you effect?"

Imogene changed colour, and her countenance fell.

Mr. Glenroy had taught her so different, and so far better, a lesson. He had shown her what even such a girl as she, was capable of, and had encouraged her to try to do it.

"Well, don't look so downcast, Imogene," said Lady Emma, coldly, ever irritable and unreasonable upon this subject—"I don't want to mortify you—I am glad—It is right that you should be anxious to do your best—but I think Mr. Glenroy mistakes the thing.—Don't be angry, Imogene—don't fire up if you can help it—when I differ in opinion from your friend—*I do* think" (with emphasis)—"that he greatly mistakes the matter—and I will tell you one of the ways in which he does it—

I am afraid he is bringing you up to think more of your public than of your domestic duties—a great mistake as regards a woman. Her public duties she may get performed by proxy, and a vast deal better, probably, than she herself can perform them—her domestic duties she never can.”

“That is not what Mr. Glenroy says,” replied Imogene, in a low voice—“He says, that whoever has possessions cannot escape the duties that belong to them—and that to leave other people to do for us, what we can, and ought to do ourselves—is very wrong indeed.”

*Lady Emma*—“Possessions!—He *will* make such a fuss about possessions—It is the first time I ever saw a girl of your age put forward in the way you are, Imogene.—I think it a mistaken plan—and we must take care you are not spoiled by it, my good girl.—We must not have you grow up proud and conceited.”

Imogene looked pained and embarrassed, but said nothing; for, indeed, what could she

say?—She felt, by that sort of intuition with which young creatures of her age are often gifted, that the plan pursued had been eminently successful; and that, far from spoiling her, it was calling into exercise all the best qualities of her heart. That, far from making her proud of her position, Mr. Glenroy had taught her to look upon herself as a servant of servants—as one whose life,—more than the ordinary life of others,—must be devoted, not to the pursuit of her own happiness, but of the general good—the good of the numbers entrusted to her care. He had early taught her the full scope of the divine text—‘Whosoever will be great among you, let him be as a servant.’ She felt, also, that, far from making her conceited, he had, without depressing her, taught her humility, by comparing the scantiness of her powers with the immensity of her obligations—exhorting her to make up by diligence, and an earnest desire to do right, for the little it was at present in her power to accomplish.

Under Mr. Glenroy’s wise, but singular

management, she felt she was going on rightly. With her mother, on the contrary, all was perplexity and confusion. She felt how little Lady Emma understood her, and she found it impossible to understand her mother, in return. Something, which she could never reach, seemed to lie between them, preventing that natural sympathy which ought to have existed. She never knew when or how she might please, or displease, her mother. Sometimes Lady Emma seemed vexed, when Imogene could not guess the reason—at others, pleased, when she was not conscious of having done anything particularly to deserve commendation. One thing she had, however, found out—that to make Eugene content and happy, was the way to ensure her mother's satisfaction. In the goodness of her heart, she never suffered herself to think that this evident partiality was misplaced or unreasonable; she attributed it to compassion for the boy's misfortunes, and told herself she ought to love and admire her mother the more for the generous kindness.

Poor child!—she sometimes found that difficult; but, contrary to the usual way of the world, she blamed her own heart instead of her mother's behaviour—and, in thus thinking no evil, came nearer the truth than she imagined.

“You don't answer,” went on Lady Emma, with nervous impatience.—“I wish you *would* speak, Imogene—you cannot think how it annoys me when people make no reply. Are you afraid? I hope I have never given you reason to be afraid of me—Is this using me quite rightly, Imogene?”

“I don't—I can't—I don't know,” Imogene began, hesitating, wounded at a tone of which she could not complain, but which entered like cold iron into her soul—the pain being increased by her own self-blame for feeling it—for was it for her to question with her mother?

“Well,” said Lady Emma, struggling to recover her temper—“I believe, my dear, I was unjust—really, there was not much for



you to say, unless you gave up your dear Mr. Glenroy's cause, which, I am sure, you never will do—and which I should be very sorry to see you do.”

But this candour, and the gentle tone of the voice, threw the young girl, as in the days when she was little Moggie, upon her knees by her mother's couch. She took up a portion of the dress Lady Emma wore, and kissed it.

“Kiss me, rather,” said Lady Emma. And when Imogene had pressed her sweet, affectionate lips upon her mother's forehead—

“Sit down there, where Eugene has just been sitting,”—pointing to the footstool—  
“and let us pluck our crow together.”

Imogene did as she was directed, taking her mother's hand in hers, and with a face from which every vestige of constraint disappeared—so sweet and cordial was her responsive nature—sat looking into her mother's anxious and care-expressing eyes, awaiting what was to come.

“My Imogene,”—for this sweetness of temper was certain to find its way, sooner or later, to all of good and generous in Emma’s heart—“My Imogene—when I said I was afraid you might grow proud or conceited, I did not mean it in the full sense of those odious words; but only that *I was* afraid, and I am afraid—that, in some respects, this being put so forward in the manner Mr. Glenroy thinks right, might make you less amiable in the eyes of some other people.”

Imogene looked as if she did not quite comprehend her; certainly, nothing in her conscience responded to the words.

“I see you do not understand me—I don’t mean to your companions in general—no, my dear, I must do you the justice to say, in that respect, I think your manners unexceptionable. There is not the slightest approach to assumption, nor, what is worse, the slightest attempt at condescension about you—I will give you this praise, my love—I have really wondered at your perfect freedom from both

faults, flattered and put forward as you are."

Her simplicity, and single-heartedness were so complete, that Imogene had been far from the idea of deserving praise, for what was the mere effect of her pure, unselfish nature. Not only unselfish in the sense of a generous disregard of personal enjoyments, but totally unoccupied with self, except as regarded sense of self-responsibility and self-inquisition—totally and entirely different, from what I mean by self-occupation.

But she was glad to have her mother's approbation, though she hardly understood for what, and said—

"I am so glad, Mamma," and kissed her mother's hand.

"But there is one case—and one to which I am most peculiarly, perhaps, morbidly sensible—where I am afraid you do not do so well.—Why, of all people in the world, should you assume a patronising air to a proud, susceptible, high-souled boy, like Eugene? He will not bear it."

“I, patronising!—Mamma—Mamma—I am sure I do not know what you mean—indeed—indeed, I don’t—Eugene!” and the tears came into her eyes—“Has he been complaining of me?”

“Not exactly complaining, perhaps,—Eugene is no tale bearer, but he cannot dissemble what he feels.”

“But, what have I done?—what have I done?—Eugene!—I would not hurt him for the world—What *can* I have done?”

“It is not exactly what you have done, but I think your manner hurts him.”

“My manner!—Oh, Mamma!—How can we help our manner. I am sure I try to do everything in my power to please him and make him happy; and comfort him when, poor boy, he cannot help being *unhappy*.”

“But there are ways of doing things—It is plain you wound his feelings, even when I am certain your intentions are the kindest and best—but it is the manner of doing acts of kindness, which gives them all their value.”

“Ah!” cried Imogene,—“what can I do? I cannot help my manner—I am sure I never thought about manner—I only thought he seemed unhappy.”

Lady Emma was affected; but her anxiety to set the matter right, was too great—she persisted—

“He complains of your very kindness—says you treat him as if you were his superior—He thinks, I believe, that you feel you are stooping—that you are benevolent, when you take these pains to be kind to him. Now, my Imogene must be aware, that nobody likes to accept kindness upon the terms of condescension.”

“Condescension!—Oh, Mamma! Oh, Eugene!—Eugene!”

“It would, indeed, be quite out of its place here—for though you are the present inheritor of this large property—in rank, his father was above yours.”

“I never thought about it—I never thought about it,” cried Imogene, in great distress—

“I never once thought about it—but when he looks unhappy, and is so silent, and the others call him sulky ; and I know it’s because he’s unhappy—what can I do?—I can’t bear to see him look so—I only tried—I am sure I only tried to comfort him, and bring him out of those humours, that make him so gloomy, that nobody likes him for. I only tried to make him cheerful and happy again. Poor boy!—poor boy!—Oh, he should have told me he did not like my way of doing it, and I would have tried to do it better. Oh, Eugene! —Eugene!”

And she burst into a flood of tears.

“You love him, then?” said Lady Emma, gently.

“Did he say I didn’t love him, too?”—sobbing.

“No—no ; he did not say that. Don’t, my Moggie, my sweet Moggie—don’t cry as if your heart would break, my darling! Foolish boy ! he was only jealous of your treating him like a younger brother—not making such a

man of him, as of Albert Faulconer and Mr. Lenham."

Such words brought the sun-shine upon her April face again.

"Then *you* are not angry, Mamma?"

"Angry! How can I be angry with my Moggie. Ah! my love, be what you are—go on as you are—be the joy, pride, and consolation of your mother's heart! and love Eugene, in spite of a little injustice on his part. I think he *was* unjust; but it's because he cares so very much for *you*.—He has no one else to love in the world—nor you either, much, indeed,—so you ought to love each other, dear children. Ah! my Imogene, how you warm your poor mother's heart when you love that poor dear boy."

A vast deal of this was unintelligible to Imogene. All she could understand of it was, what she had so often understood before, that nothing gave her mother so much pleasure as to see Eugene treated with kindness.

She loved her mother dearly ; and there was a melancholy and air of suffering about her which excited her tenderest pity. Probably, she, in her innocence, attributed it to her mother's widowed state.—Death appears, to these young, inexperienced hearts, so awful a circumstance, that, far from finding it hard to believe in any one being inconsolable, their difficulty is in admitting the possibility of consolation.

Her heart warmed ; and, comforted by such words of affection from her mother, Imogene soon cheered up. Lady Emma, satisfied with this demonstration of, as she thought, partial affection, which came so opportunely in support of Lady Faulconer's assertions, was content to pursue the subject of Eugene's grievances no further.

She had the discretion, at last, to end the subject—or, rather, she no longer cared to continue it.

“ Well,” she said, “ dear, you must go now. Bathe your eyes with rose-water—Mr. Glenroy



will be vexed if he thinks you have been crying—and never mind what I said—I am sure there can be nothing much amiss, when you feel so entirely as you ought to do. Good, sweet Imogene—Give me a kiss, and if Eugene was a little unjust, you must forgive him—you know he is of high eastern blood, and of a noble, susceptible, imaginative nature.”

And dear, good Imogene, told herself that she ought to make every allowance for his peculiar and high nature, and to love him on as she had done before. But was that possible?

## CHAPTER VIII.

Money, like manure, does no good till it is spread. There is no real use of riches, except in distribution ; the rest is all conceit.

BACON.

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WHEN Imogene entered the drawing-room, the sun had been sometime set ; and, though the windows were still open, admitting the evening air, candles were lighted, and every one engaged in some way or other.

Mr. Glenroy and Mr. Elmsley sat at one of the tables, examining some books of architectural drawings, and Albert, standing behind, was looking over them. Lady Ulick, extended her full length upon a sofa, with the last new novel in her hand, was yawning as if she would dislocate her pretty jaws.—Lord Ulick, upon

another, in much the same attitude, was audibly snoring over his newspaper.—Charlotte had challenged me to chess, and we sat at a small table, in all the futile seriousness of that most respectable game.—Lady Faulconer, in a distant corner of the room, was engaged with Eugene and Laura, to whom she was teaching the mysteries of back-gammon; and the lively rattle of the box—and a pleasant little laugh from Laura, were the only sounds that relieved the sobriety of this most silent meeting.

The door opened, and Imogene appeared. She looked round, hesitated, and seemed half disinclined to come in. It was true,—for, almost the first time in her life, she felt embarrassed, uncertain,—feeling as if she scarcely knew how to look or what to do. She had seldom felt in this manner before. Characters, transparent and truthful as hers, are usually spared the nervousnesses and hesitations which torment those, who are not habitually well bred, and early trained to good manners, or who think a good deal about themselves. But the

plague of self-consciousness beset her at this moment.—How should she meet Eugene?—How should she look at him.—Unkindly? No—but kindly, could she? when he had been so unjust and unkind himself.

It was a great relief to discern his velvet dress, for a part of that, was all she could see of him, at the very further end of the room, Lady Faulconer standing over him and hiding his head and face from general view; with Laura, in high spirits, at the same table, her *cornet* lifted high by her pretty little arm. They were so busy, that not one of the three turned the head as the door opened. Imogene came forward.

“My dear lassie,” began Mr. Glenroy, looking up—“we want you.—You left a sentence unfinished when you flew away to your mother—like a blithe bird, as you are,—but the last word was a pregnant one—Church.—But how’s this?”—seizing her by the arm, and looking her hard in the face—“You have been crying.”

She coloured and turned her head away—but said nothing.

“Crying,—and what can my bonny bairn have been crying for?—Little Moggie,”—in a tone of great affection—“is not given to crying.”

“Oh! nothing—nothing,—I was only very foolish—nothing, dear Mr. Glenroy, nothing!”

You should have seen the expression of Albert’s eyes, as they fastened upon her.

“Well—well,”—her guardian said, kindly—“I understand . . . Nothing means don’t wish to tell you anything.—I beg your pardon, my ain dear lassie, for even asking;—but don’t cry, if you can help it, when old Glenroy’s in the house.—It makes him feel queerly.”

Mr. Elmsley’s eyes were not raised.—He had too much delicacy to look up, but you saw by his countenance that he was much moved. Red eyes with Imogene were quite an event—yet he *had* once or twice seen them before; and had found reason to suspect what cause, and what cause almost

alone, it was which made Imogene shed tears.

As for Albert, he looked as if he longed to press forward, catch her to his heart, and kiss every trace of sadness away.

She tried to cheer up; but, to tell truth, her poor little heart was still heavy.

Mr. Glenroy fixed his eyes upon her again. He was not one who, like Mr. Elmsley, feared even to look up, lest he should add annoyance to sorrow; yet he said nothing more in the way of inquiry, but only after a silent contemplation of her face, during which a shade of grave anxiety passed over his own—as if to divert her attention, he turned to the book which lay upon the table, and made room for her to sit down as she most often did, upon the corner of his chair, saying—

“We must proceed to business.—What was it my lassie was thinking of?—I was talking of a music hall, at Armidale.—She seemed to wish for something else, first.”

Armidale and business were sure to

divert Imogene's attention from any selfish sorrow. She brightened up in a moment.

"Yes, dear Mr. Glenroy—I *did* wish for something else, first—but it is not I, that thought of it—it was Mr. Elmsley—I am sorry—It seems now *very* ungrateful, not to have thought of that the very, very first."

"Well—well—you have recollected it now—You want to have a church—I doubt whether the folk at Armidale, will much thank you for one.—They are mostly, I fancy, of the sort which you in England consider as rascally dissenters, and whom we in Scotland look upon as much better Christians than many of yourselves."

Imogene looked as if she did not quite enter into the full meaning of this speech.

"I only wished . . ." said she, looking up smilingly and lovingly in his face—"It only seemed to me, and I have been thinking of it even before you came this time—that it would seem as if *we* did not care for God," in a low, trembling, awestruck voice, the sacred

name was uttered—"If we were so busy, setting up all sorts of other pleasant things,—and did not build a house for Him—as David in the Bible says . . . I am but a child," she added, with humility—"you know best what is right."

"My ain dear lassie — my ain heart's treasure," he said, fondly—"that is right—that is as it should be—that's just as I want you to be.—Think for yourself, 'as far as the Almighty gives you grace and capacity—for it is your own task, my bonny child, and you cannot too soon learn to execute it.—You are right—'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.'—The neglect had not struck me in this light—I was in the wrong—it shall be amended—and see! already for the love of thee, I was going to set about it—but I like better to do it because thou art in the right, than because I can refuse thee nothing.—Yes, Imogene, to see you in the right—thinking rightly—acting rightly—that is the crowning felicity for old Glenroy."



His voice quivered a little with intense tenderness; but he began to turn over the leaves of the book before him, his arm thrown fondly round her waist, as she sat upon the corner of his chair.

He was about to open one of the plates when he stopped, turned his head suddenly to where Albert stood, and said—

“Young gentleman,—you seem to have some taste for these matters. Let us have your opinion, too. Take a chair and sit down by me and this good little lassie, here—Shall he, Imogene?”

Imogene coloured, and smiled, and her face was bright and happy, as she moved a little nearer to Mr. Glenroy, as if to make room for Albert.

He drew a chair and sat down by them, without waiting for a second invitation, as you will easily believe.

I was looking up, whilst Charlotte was deeply considering her next move. I caught Lady Faulconer's face—she had turned

rather away from the back-gammon players, and seemed watching the little scene at the table with attention. But she met my eye, and, instantly changing her position, devoted herself again to the two young combatants.

And now all was quiet in the large drawing-room, except the little shrieks of Laura—low murmurs from Eugene—the rattle of the dice, at one end; and the murmuring conversation kept up over the book of architectural prints in the centre of the room.

I could not help looking at the group, as the intervals of my own game allowed me. Albert and Imogene appeared deeply engaged in what they were about; but the sweet play of their countenances, when they looked up and spoke to each other, was lovely. I observed that Mr. Glenroy very often addressed Albert; and there was an expression of complacency and satisfaction, at the intelligent answers he received from the dear Celestial. Never had he better deserved the name. Never had I seen

him look so handsome, so intelligent, so exactly what one would wish a youth to be, as that evening.

There was the promise of a glorious summer in that first opening day of spring.

Alas ! poor Albert.

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The next day, this pleasant party was broken up, and we returned to Drystoke.

We travelled in the same manner as when we came. Albert mounted the box, and drove, never once turning to speak to any one during the whole way. He was apparently absorbed in his own thoughts.

Within the carriage, people seemed disinclined to talk. Either out of spirits—or tired—or, perhaps, finding it impossible even for *them*, after the kind and hospitable manner in which they had been received, to indulge in their usual subject of conversation—the faults and follies of their neighbours. That topic abstained from, there seemed no other, inter-

esting enough to excite to discourse. I was so glad to be spared what it gave me so much pain to hear, that I was quite content to be dull, and to watch the flying trees and hedges, as we speeded along. I was also very glad, and hoped it was an earnest of future improvement in this way, when a remark of Charlotte's, with which she broke the long silence, met a sharp rebuke from her mother.

“Well, Haughton is a fine place—but there's a monstrous steep hill to go up. However, one has a good view when one gets there—and they are nice people, don't you think so, Mr. Lenham? Only Imogene will grow up into a prig, or, what is worse, a Charlotte Corday—Who ever in the world before thought of giving a girl a tutor, instead of a governess? Why, she'll be quite an oddity, when she grows a little older. For that matter, she's an oddity, in my opinion, now—poor thing! but how *can* she help it?—And Eugene, what a cross-grained, curious tempered fellow he is—I declare they are the strangest set . . .”

“I wish, Charlotte,” said her mother, with severity, “that I could ever teach you to restrain the license of that bitter tongue of yours. Nothing is too sacred or too good to escape you. That habit of decrying everything and everybody that you happen to speak of, is one of the most unamiable and repulsive in which a girl can indulge—and you are dreadfully given to it.”

Charlotte gave the usual almost invisible shrug with her shoulders, and turned to me with a look that said—

“Where did I learn that evil habit, think you?”

“As for Imogene Aubrey,” Lady Faulconer went on—“all I can say is, tutor or no tutor, I wish you were like her. She’s a delightful creature—and as for Eugene, he’s one of the most interesting beings I ever saw in my life. So let me hear no more of this stuff.”

And, accordingly, Charlotte pursed up her mouth, and relapsed into silence.

## CHAPTER IX.

Oh world, thy slippery turns ! friends now fast sworn,  
Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,  
. . . . . shall within one hour,  
On a dissension of a doit, break out  
To bitterest enmity.

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THE scene now changes, and we return to Eton.

Two or three years have elapsed, and we are all rising fast, through advancing youth, to manhood.

Albert and I can now scarcely be called boys, though we are not yet men—alas! some way from that.

I was ever a staid and quiet personage; but he, rash, hot, impetuous—though most generous, fervid, disinterested, and right-minded—

is, as yet, far from being disciplined to self-control and reflection.

The impulse of the moment governs him still; and many false and imperfect views—many mistaken principles, remain to be corrected, by that discipline of life, through which he, more than any fellow I ever knew, was found to profit.

The friendship between him and the Viking, in spite of one or two coolnesses and interruptions, arising from the peculiar temper of young Hardress, is in greater strength than ever. It was increased, by the event I described in the opening of my story. The Viking had saved Albert's life, and his generous heart seemed to hail this obligation to his friend, with fresh pleasure. It served as an excuse to his own high spirit, for putting up with many an exhibition of Hardress's haughty and wayward temper; which Albert's heart refused to resent, and which it sorely tried his notions of honour to submit to.

But that he owed his life to the Viking, was a ready excuse for every concession, which,

under other circumstances, he might have felt it unworthy of him to make.

I am sorry to say that the Viking, of a far less noble temper, insensibly began to take advantage of this, and now and then to treat his hot-headed and warm-hearted ally, in a manner that it grieved me to see.

Eugene was now at Eton.

Not very long after our last visit to Haughton, Mr. Elmsley had found it necessary to make a serious remonstrance to Lady Emma, as to the manner in which this fine, and very clever, boy was going on. That he possessed genius, and of the first order, he acknowledged; but he believed that dangerous gift, according to the manner in which things were allowed to proceed, only threatened, joined as it was with daily increasing self-will, to complete the inevitable destruction of what was right and good in him.

Encouraged by Lady Emma in every caprice and fancy,—finding in her an ever ready listener to his complaints, he was giving way



without restraint, to the waywardness of a character naturally imaginative, and sensitive to an extreme, till he was likely to prove, not only a self-tormentor in the highest degree, but the plague and tyrant of the whole house.

Proud, tenacious, susceptible, fanciful,—it was often impossible to please or satisfy him.

In vain, Imogene, with angelic goodness and patience, victimised herself in every way, in order to content him—he only grew the more unreasonable, unkind, exacting, and unjust, and treated her at times, with something almost amounting to barbarity. These moods alternated with passionate paroxysms of remorse, self-accusation, and despair, when he had succeeded, in torturing and tormenting his companion, till she broke out into sobs and tears. But this exhibition of better feeling, only added to the evil, by melting her soft and candid temper, reviving her affection, and, upon the whole, keeping alive a species of interest, which might, perhaps, in a more peaceable atmosphere, have subsided into the

quiet indifference of daily intercourse—at least, so Lady Emma flattered herself, and so Lady Faulconer, her only confidante in this matter, encouraged her to hope.

But, whatever the effect as to that great object in which Lady Emma's very existence seemed bound up, one thing appeared but too certain to every one else—that Eugene would himself be inevitably ruined, if these evil habits were not corrected.

Mr. Elmsley was a sensible and excellent man, and all the pride he might have taken in the rearing a second Byron, was lost in the desire to do his duty by the boy, and this duty, he felt, could alone be discharged by urging Lady Emma to consent to send this pampered darling to school.

A public school, it is true, had not saved Byron from much deeply to be deplored; but it would have been worse, far worse, if he had been left as Eugene seemed about to be, and his faculties suffered to grow up in their wildest luxuriance—without a judicious hand

with authority enough to restrain them, and wanting those beneficial checks upon temper, eccentricity, and, above all, self-delusion, sensitiveness, and pride, which boys, at a public school, afford to each other.

Lady Emma wept, and resisted, and said he was too young to go.

Mr. Elmsley proposed a preparatory school. But this, Eugene himself would not hear of. He said he would go to Eton—he should like Eton well enough. They'd make a man of him there,—but anywhere else he positively refused to go; and he started up, when something was said by Mr. Elmsley, of the necessity of obedience if the measure were decided upon, and proudly asked—by what right anybody there pretended to coerce *him*? They were not appointed his guardians, that he was aware. He was the son of a great warrior, and a chief, and he would show them he knew how to assert the right to follow his own will.

Mr. Elmsley would have advised some attempt

upon Lady Emma's part, to show this singular boy that he was not so perfectly independent as he thought himself—for that, without her self-assumed guardianship, he would be utterly friendless,—and if dismissed from Haughton—without family or home. It was true, he had some money ; but this, owing to various circumstances not necessary to detail here, had been greatly diminished from the original sum—no very large one—which his father had placed in Mr. Birchell's hands when he committed the child to his care.

At that time, things in Egypt were in so uncertain and confused a state, that a considerable portion of the property Omar Bey had calculated upon, Mr. Birchell had not been able to realize—so that, without Lady Emma's positive assistance, it was doubtful whether the income thence derived would be sufficient for the expenses of Eton ; that is to say, at least such expenses as a boy of Eugene's temper and habits is too apt to indulge in.

But Lady Emma would hear of no such

thing.—She seemed to shrink with horror from any attempt to curb the high and intractable spirit of the boy, by revelations that could in the slightest degree humble or mortify him.

He was wronged—as she firmly believed, doubly wronged—and all these lofty pretensions of his would be but too fully justified by his claims, when the truth—as it was her full persuasion, sooner or later, it would do—came to light.

So Eugene was, as usual, allowed to have it his own way. Mr. Elmsley, who was deeply anxious upon the subject—for there was something about Eugene, in spite of his innumerable faults, that it was impossible not to take interest in—consoled himself by thinking that, at his age—for he was still young enough to be a fag—he might find Eton not quite such a favourable place for the indulgence of self-will as he seemed to expect.

So now all was preparation for Eton; and the fuss that was made, and the more than

motherly anxieties of Lady Emma—and the way every person and thing in the house, not excepting Imogene herself, were expected to be made subservient to this grand object, would have been enough to spoil a less arrogant and exacting temper than Eugene's.

For him—spoil him, it could hardly be said to do.—He took it all as a matter of course, and seemed to feel not the slightest gratitude to any one, except to Lady Emma, herself. For still, amid a thousand acts that I could name, of petulance, insubordination, and ill-humour, to her—that he loved her at heart could not be doubted. Perhaps, the same might be said with regard to his feelings towards Imogene.—They seemed perverse and unaccountable in a boy of his age—yet there are boys who appear as capable of love, jealousy, and all their train of caprices, and injustices, as much older men.

Eugene's behaviour to Imogene, was that of tyrant and lover mingled.—He was unjust, sulky, morose, ill-tempered;—he was jealous

and exacting ;—she, gentle, just, and kind—forgiving all things—enduring all things—hoping all things, till even Eugene was softened by this gentle sweetness—and began to love her in truth, and more than he himself was aware.

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“We are going to Drystoke for a few days, Imogene—Albert Faulconer will be at home ---I have heard that it is a great advantage when a boy goes to a public school, that he should be taken up by any youth belonging to the higher forms, and especially if he is so popular as, I believe, Albert to be.—He is a friend of yours—I shall speak to him, and ask his good will myself, and you will do the same, won’t you, my dear?”

“To be sure I will, Mamma—and I wish Eugene may make a real friend of Albert—he is such a sensible boy !”

“Yes, he is a fine boy, or rather young man—almost—though not quite so interesting

as Eugene—but who is? However, a very promising youth—I do not wonder that Lady Faulconer is so proud of him.”

Imogene did not look up from the frame at which she was as usual embroidering—she was sitting at a little distance from her mother.

“You will do this, Imogene?—Sometimes a word from a companion of their own age has more weight than whole orations from an old woman, like me.”

“Oh, Mamma!”

And she looked up, and laughed—and well she might, at the picture of so much beauty; for that beauty was in many eyes enhanced, rather than impaired, by the anxious, languid expression of the sweet eyes.

“I hope—I hope Eugene will not be *very* uncomfortable at Eton.”

“Oh, I can’t think why he should—Mr. Lenham and Albert like it so much.”

“But, then, Eugene is so different from other boys.”

“Why, yes,”—said Imogene, consideringly



—“he *is* different from other boys—Sometimes one wishes, he were more like—I mean for the sake of his own happiness ; at other times, I think it would be a pity he should be much altered—He is so interesting even in his very faults—don’t you think so, Mamma ?”

“Indeed, I do, my darling—I think him the most gifted and interesting creature I ever met with in my life—of his age I mean,”—she added, and sighed.

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“ And will you be kind to him, and patient with his wilful humours, Albert ?—I know he is tiresome—to boys particularly—Sometimes he tries even *my* patience.—He tries everybody’s patience but Mamma’s.”

“ *Does* he try your patience ? ” was Albert’s answer.

“ Why—to tell the truth—the honest, simple truth . . . but don’t ask me—I am so sorry for him—His is a horrid position—I

try never to forget it—I try to love him with all my heart—I am so sorry for him.”

“Does love come when it is called?”

“Yes, I really think,” she said, laughing, “that it does—I don’t think I should love Eugene as I do, if love didn’t come when it was called.”

“Then you own you *have* to call it.”

“Well, perhaps I have—but it always comes.”

“I would not give a whistle for love like that,”—said Albert, scornfully, and half angrily.

“Oh! now you speak and look just like Eugene,—and at such times I feel obliged to call very loud *indeed*, to make the love come,” she said, playfully, and a little wickedly.

“Then you have to call very loud sometimes?—I wonder you take so much trouble for any fellow.”

“Not—for any but him.”

“Him!—and why alone him?”

“Because he is a sort of brother—He is like a

son to Mamma, and so he is like a brother to me.—I think one can love one's *relations* better by trying—by trying to think of all that is good and beautiful in them—and not of their faults; and I think one ought to do so.—I have tried hard, Albert,” she said, for she loved to tell him all that was in her heart—“to look upon and to love Eugene, as if he were verily and indeed my brother, and to think only of his wonderful talents, and the many good points there are about him—and not of his defects—just as I should do if he were really my brother,—which I sometimes quite forget that he is not.”

“And are you so kind as to do the same by Lenham and me?” he said, colouring high.

She laughed.

“Oh, no! that's quite a different thing,—Mr. Lenham has no faults,—and, as for you——”

“And as for me—what?”

“Oh, I don't know what I was going to say, but it's quite another thing.”

“Quite another thing about being like brothers,” and he turned away.

“Don’t take it unkindly, Albert—indeed, I did not mean—but you know it is impossible—we are not,—we cannot be like brother and sister, as Eugene and I are.”

“Then, I suppose, you don’t care for me at all.”

“Oh, Albert!”

“And you want me to stand his friend at Eton, Imogene—I can tell you, you are giving me a task that it will not be the easiest thing in the world to accomplish.—Why, Eugene must alter a good deal before he will tolerate Eton, or Eton him.”

“What do you mean?”—she asked, alarmed—“I was afraid—Oh, I *hope* he won’t be *very* unhappy there.”

“That will be as he takes it.”

“But, Albert, be his friend—for my sake stand his friend—Advise him, help him, tell him what is right—Oh, he does sadly—sadly want a great many things, I’m afraid.”

“He is to be at our Dame’s, I understand—He’ll be fag to the Viking.”

“The Viking—who’s that?”

“Why, Hardress—You’ve heard me speak of Hardress.”

“Oh, yes, often and often;—but must he be a fag?—Well, if he must, I am glad it is to Mr. Hardress.”

“I am not so sure of *that*,” thought Albert, aside—aloud, he only said—

“Why so?”

“Because he is your friend—and therefore he is a very nice person.”

“Because people love by contraries—eh?”

“Oh, no—no—no,”—laughing—“Naughty Albert;—but you shall not get a compliment by fishing for it.”

“So you want me to take care of him for your sake—for his *sister’s* sake, mind!”—he said with emphasis.

“Exactly so—fancy me his sister, and Mamma his mother, for that’s just as we feel and no mother or sister could be more anxious about him—So just do, as I am certain you would do, if he were really

my brother—which, in every thing but the name, he is.”

“Heaven help me!”—he said, with a seriousness that startled her—“As I am faithful to that trust—for *your* sake—as *your* brother!—Imogene, I will watch over him as if he were my own brother.”

“That’s a dear kind Albert—Thank you—thank you, a thousand times.”

“Will you give me a pledge that you trust him to me?”

“A pledge?—I don’t understand.”

“Well, will you give me something to keep—to remind me of this conversation—though, Heaven knows, I shall never, never forget it.”

“I have nothing to give you here.”

“Oh yes, you have—that little black ribbon, or velvet, or something that always hangs round your neck—I want that.—I wonder what treasure of memory hangs to it.—Eugene’s hair, perhaps,”—he added, jestingly.

“Oh no—no—not *his* hair—I don’t mind

enough for him in reality to put his hair there ;”—then, as her countenance was suddenly overcast with a cloud of deep sadness—“ It is my poor father’s picture, and my poor father’s hair.”

“ Might I look at it—I never saw a picture of him.”

“ There is not one at Haughton. He never was painted but once—and that was for somebody—a very particular person—that I can remember when I was a child.—She used to be very kind, and petted me, more than was good for me. That was when Mamma’s back was turned, which was very bad for a child—but she died, the night poor Papa died—and in her drawers, when the servants looked over her things, this picture was found, with a paper upon it, saying it was to be given to me. Nurse showed it me, and put it into a drawer, and locked it up,—but I could never rest, little thing as I was, but I must have it to wear.—So, Nurse tied it round my neck with a black ribbon—and hid it in the bosom of my

frock. One day, Mamma observed the black ribbon, and she asked me what I wore that for, and I told her I had a picture of Papa hanging to it—and she asked me how I came by it; and when I told her Alice Craven had left it for me;—she went pale as death, and then crimson red—and in a hurried, anxious way, asked to see it, and rang the bell for Nurse.

“I showed her the picture—poor Mamma! but she gave it me back again, and told me always to wear it—and then she sent for Nurse, and questioned her a long time about the things, and the paper and what other effects of Alice’s were left—but there was nothing to be found, I believe, except a few old gowns.—In large houses, like Haughton, there are such loads of servants—and they seemed to have made very free with poor Mrs. Craven’s matters; but I believe there was not a relation in the world to claim them.”

“May I see the miniature—I want to know the face of him that was *your* father, Imogene—I wonder whether you are like him.”



“ They say I am—Poor—poor Papa !”

She drew the miniature from her bosom ;—  
he took it and gazed on it intently.

“ Yes—you are like him, Imogene.—It is from him you got those eyes—and a look . . . He was a very sensible man, I believe—and you have inherited all his sense, Imogene !”

“ Have I ?—Oh, Albert, you are turned flatterer.—No, what I have, if I have any, I owe to Mr. Glenroy.—He has been a friend, indeed.”

Whilst she spoke, he was untying the black velvet ribbon to which the portrait hung.

“ This is for me—and that is for you,”—giving her his hand—“ my pledge and promise that I will look upon Eugene as if he were my own brother ; and back him—yes, even if it were against Hardress himself.”

## CHAPTER X.

He, conscious of superior merit,  
Contemns their base reviling spirit,  
His state and dignity assumes ;  
And to the sun displays his plumes ;  
Mark, with what insolence and pride  
The creature takes his haughty stride.

GAY.

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THE holidays are at an end, and we are all at Eton, again. The same party at Mrs. Hollingworth's house that was slightly sketched in my opening chapter.

Hardress, Faulconer, Stanley, and the rest ; Lenham, the Minister—Hardress, the Viking—Faulconer, still the Celestial Archer—for, though not a common habit of the school, these nick-names were popular amongst us at Mrs. Hollingworth's. Her's was a large

house, and, at the time of which I write, in high reputation; so that many of the first boys in the school were there—Such as are usually sent to the tutors' houses.

Eugene was come up, and had taken his place; and, as Albert had anticipated, he was fag to the Viking.

Already had Albert endeavoured to smooth the way, by exciting an interest for him in Hardress's mind, speaking of his abilities, and of his descent, and endeavouring to bespeak his patience for Eugene's many faults and peculiarities; but Hardress made a slighting sort of answer—

“All very well in you, Celestial, as his mother—or, she who stands for his mother—is a friend and connection of your mother's—but if he has any of the jackanapes about him, it's no use talking—I'll have it out of him. What are chickens sent here for, but to be taught to run.”

“Yes—but, Hardress—It's not that he's a jackanapes, but he's the son of a Circassian

woman, and he's not like us exactly, in many things. He's as proud as if he were the Sultan of Egypt himself."

"Proud! Well, we'll get it out of him."

"But do it gently—do it gently, Hardress—You'll drive the fellow mad, else."

"Never you fear—I'll bring him to his senses again, if I do."

"But, Hardress, just listen to me—"

"I don't know what's come to you, Archer—you're grown sentimental, of late. Pooh! pooh, man! Sentiment does not become you at all—Lack-a-daisy! what a face you pull—Why, it's like my young lady's governess, with rueful countenance, lamenting herself over the cruelties of fagging. Why, we were all fagged, were we not?—and all the better for it—and do you think this fine eastern young gentleman of your's won't be the better for having his slave-mother fagged out of him, leaving what he had from his English father behind—for so I understand it—room to grow—Heigh, Celestial?"

“ Yes, Hardress—You are right in the main, but there is a way—and I promised his mother and sister I would do my best for him, and I will. He’s not a bad fellow on the whole, but he has a great many faults ; but then, Lady Emma has spoilt him ; and, in short, Hardress, if you’ll have a little patience with him, and take him by the right handle—why, I’ll be very much obliged to you—that’s all.”

“ And if you’ll talk like a sensible fellow, and not stuff me with Circassian romances, I shall be very much obliged to you, Celestial—that’s all.”

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Eugene did not seem the least daunted by his first appearance at school. He held himself so high, and every one else so cheap, that to consider himself anything less than equal to the very best among them all, never entered his head. This sort of presumption in a boy of his inches and standing in the school, was,

of course, found insufferable ; and there was a general inclination to thwart and humble him. As for fagging, he had been initiated into the laws of that institution by Laura—and so tenderly entreated by Imogene to submit with a good grace to what must be—that he took his place cheerfully as fag to Hardress, who, being a tall, fine, manly boy, imposed somewhat upon him. He seemed as if he was inclined to look favourably upon his master.

This lasted for a short time, during which, to my surprise and that of Albert—who had heard so many conflicting accounts of his indolence and indifference to study at Haughton—the boy applied so indefatigably to his lessons that he soon took a high place among his fellows, and promised, in the course of six months, by mere dint of his abilities alone, to get beyond the fagging.

He had not only dispatched the business he had to do, with a quickness that was astonishing,—but was ready to assist his master in copying out, and sometimes finishing his ex-

ercises, in looking out words and phrases, and employments of that nature—to these he never objected, but performed such duties with a cheerfulness and alacrity that pleased both Albert and myself.

To Hardress, his conduct was just that which a master likes in a fag. But Eugene took his revenge, if it may be called so, upon others. He was intractable—disobliging—sullen—reserved—to most of the other boys in the house; and appeared to have an opinion of himself, and a contempt for them, that not even his wonderful success and display of almost transcendant ability could render tolerable.

There was one great, tall, powerful boy—the son of a man who had made an immense commercial fortune—who took a peculiar dislike to him. The antipathy, indeed, seemed mutual. Eugene looked down upon the child of commerce with sovereign contempt; and, because he was large and powerful, and bull-necked, and withal not very brilliant in his

conversation, or remarkable for his talents, had christened him 'the coal-heaver,'—which, rumour said, his grandfather had actually been. This soubriquet, when it reached Radcliffe's ears, galled him to the quick; though it delighted the rest of the set—for all men hold mere brute strength in mingled contempt and aversion.

The feud with Radcliffe contributed to prolong the period of Eugene's favour with his master. Hardress was delighted with the boy's spirit, and when Radcliffe threatened to thrash him for his impudence, told him to touch his fag, if he dare.

There was a moral force about Hardress which everybody felt; and for some time Radcliffe forbore; but, when no longer called upon to protect him, Hardress became more impatient of Eugene's faults; and when, at last, he began 'to practice them upon himself,' the temper and insolence which he had rather, when directed to others, encouraged, than repressed, were met with a high hand.



“Why are not my muffins toasted, this morning, sir?” cried Hardress, angrily, when coming out in his dressing-gown, one morning, he prepared to sit down to breakfast, expecting to find all in order and comfortable, under the exertions of his well-trained fags. —“Why are not my muffins toasted, as usual?”

“Because there’s nobody to toast ’em, I s’pose,” answered Eugene, boldly.—“Felton is cleaning your shoes—and Hutton is brushing your coat—and Littleton’s sick—you know that.”

“Yes, I know that—and I know who I ordered to take his work upon him—do *you* know that, sir?”

“Yes,” said Eugene.

“Yes—why wasn’t it done, then?”

“Because I don’t choose to do it.”

“You don’t choose to do it!—and what are you, pray?”

“My father’s son—and I didn’t come here to toast muffins.”

“Didn’t you?—we’ll see that.—Take the toasting-fork and do it this instant, sir—or I’ll know the reason why.”

Eugene stood like the statue of defiance.

“Well, sir!” shouted Hardress.

No answer—not a motion of limb, lip, or eye—not a change of colour, except a little paler—but it was with resolution, not fear.

“Can’t you speak?—Won’t you do as I bid you?”

“I won’t toast your muffins.”

“Then I’ll thrash you.—Say that again, and I’ll thrash you.”

“I won’t toast your muffins.”

“Take that toasting-fork and do it at once!” cried Hardress, striving to master his rising passion—“or I’ll thrash you till you can’t stand.”

“You may kill me, if you like—I don’t care—I’ll be negro slave to no tyrant.”

“Tyrant!—Say that again.”

“Tyrant.”

“You won’t do as I bid you?”

“No, cut me in pieces—yes, do. You’re a big fellow, almost a man—Cut me in pieces—it will be noble and brave—A fellow like me, about as thick as your arm—yes, do it—do it—do it—and get your muffins toasted, if you can.”

Hardress was pale with rage.”

“I’ll tell you what I’ll make you do, then—if you don’t like playing cook, will you be better pleased to be my shoe-black—You go and clean my shoes, and send that other fellow to do your work up here.”

Eugene stood stock still. There was a strange expression in his eye.

“You won’t!” shouted Hardress—“you defy me!—you won’t!” and he seized hold of him by the shoulder and shook him till he was dizzy.

“Take that.”

But the door opened, and Albert appeared.

“Heigh day!—What’s the matter?—What’s the matter, Hardress?”

“The young rascal,” cried Hardress, almost

inarticulate with passion—"He dares to defy me."

"What's this, Eugene?" going up to him, "Defy your master—that will never do here, my boy."

"He wants to make a menial and a slave of me."

"The young gentleman's grander than any of the rest of us," cried Hardress—"We all fagged, and did as we were bid, and a great deal of good it did us—and I'll teach him Eton law—won't I?—or I'll . . . ."

"Kill me—yes, do—you easily can—do, do."

"Hold your tongue, Eugene—You forget who you are speaking to."

"And who *am* I speaking to?—What's he?—Who's he? that I should do slavish offices for him!"

"It's the custom of the place, Eugene—You ought not to have come here, if you didn't mean to conform to the customs of the place; wrong or right, it's what we all have done in our turn; Hardress and I, among the rest,

and I don't see as how we're the worse for it, not I," said Albert, goodhumouredly.

But Eugene cast upon him a look of scorn.

"*You* might, but *I* won't—there's a difference."

"A difference! you young jackanapes," cried Hardress, losing all patience, and again seizing him roughly—"What do you mean by that?—What do you mean by that?" he shouted, and raised his powerful arm.

"Don't, Hardress," said the Archer, laying hold of the uplifted arm and arresting its descent—"Remember, he is still a child."

"A child!" repeated Eugene, sulkily—"Not such a *child*—No, Mr. Viking, I am no child. Beat me to pieces—Thrash me to atoms—I mayn't be as big, but I am as much a man as you, and a thousand times more! for I'd scorn to tyrannise over the weak, as you do."

"Tyrannise—Mr. Viking!—Nicknaming me!—Who gave *you* leave to call me Viking?"

"The other boys do it, why shouldn't I?"

"Because you are a powder monkey, and a

jackanapes—Let go, Albert—let go—I'll annihilate him."

But Albert kept his hold.

"Let go," cried Hardress, turning almost black with passion, and endeavouring violently to tear the hand of Albert from the arm it grasped—"Are you in a league to insult me? let me go—or,"—with a tremendous oath,—  
"I'll hate you to my dying day."

"Let him go, Mr. Faulconer," said Eugene—"It's no use trying to hold in a mad bull."

Hardress stamped, and absolutely foamed with rage.

"Be quiet, you imp of mischief," cried Albert,—  
"Don't you see you have driven him mad."

Eugene uttered a wild, almost savage cry of triumph. What must have happened next, it is vain to conjecture; if at this moment the door had not opened, and who should appear but Radcliffe.

He stood still for a second, regarding the scene.—Albert hanging upon Hardress, evi-

dently keeping him back against his will, and Eugene pale, resolute, and defiant, standing before them.

“Hey day! I beg pardon—Didn’t think to find Pylades and Orestes in such a pickle—Oh ho!—I spy! There’s rebellion in the state! Fagdom is in danger!—How’s this? High treason against the Eton Institutes—eh?”

The voice of Radcliffe acted on Hardress like a charm, and he became suddenly cool. He gently shook his arm from Albert, who, indeed, instantly let it go, and saying—“Albert, take the fellow away, I’ll reckon with him another time,” turned to Radcliffe, and quietly asked—

“And what does Mr. Radcliffe want with me?”

“Vastly awkward,” said Radcliffe, affecting a grotesque air of embarrassment—“to interrupt a domestic scene of such pure felicity—Makes one feel deuced awkward, in faith.—What I wanted, was to speak to you about the match between the two houses—but any other time

will do. We can wait till you have reduced the refractory young gentleman to order by the gentle measures Faulconer seems so well to approve."

Hardress again turned pale.

"Listening"—he muttered.

But Radcliffe, though the colour flew to his face, affected not to hear him.

"And so, good morning to you—and, as the man says in the play—'At your good leisure I will wait on you.'"

"Don't go away in that manner, Radcliffe," said Hardress.

"Albert, take the child away . . . If you've anything to say, say it—if you've anything to propose, propose it."

"I've to propose first and foremost, that you should do execution upon the refractory, and avenge the insulted laws of fagdom, by giving that young jackanapes a good licking—that is to say, if your better half"—looking with a sneer at Albert—"will allow you."

Albert," said Hardress, pushing him to-



wards the door, as his eye began to flash fire—  
“get out of this—It’s no concern of yours.”

“But it is a concern of mine—Radcliffe insults me in you.”

“Ha! ha!—Second him!—Side with him!—It’s all right!” and Radcliffe laughed contemptuously—“but I see I’m one too many, just now—so wishing this happy party a very good morning, and that we may hear that two big fellows have succeeded at last in reducing one little one—here I go.”

And away went Radcliffe.

“You see,” said Albert, turning to Eugene—  
“you see what your behaviour brings upon your master—I tell you again, you have no business here if you won’t conform to the customs of the school.”

“And *I* tell you,” cried Hardress, for his rage was increased by what he thought the absurd patience of Albert, which he felt inclined to resent as a species of treachery against himself—“and,” (with another terrific oath)—“I swear it—that you shall black

my shoes every morning for a week, or I'll thrash you to within an inch of your life, as sure as the clock strikes nine."

"Hardress!—Hardress!"

"Faulconer!—Faulconer!—Don't mock me with that remonstrating face—I know well enough how it is—New fancies!—new favourites!—Very well—You think I care for it—I don't care—no—not the value of a straw for your affection!"

But his voice was as of one choking, when he said so.

"Don't you—Oh, Hardress!—You can't say that again!—You know how false it is."

"I know that *you* are as false as a woman—as capricious as a woman—and the slave of a woman; and, as such, I whistle you down the wind—aye, as easily as I would this feather"—blowing a small feather that was sailing in the air before him.

"You see, Eugene, what you bring upon me," said Albert, turning away, deeply hurt.

"No—no—it's not him—he's a mere atom

in the account. I've seen it long—I've known it long—You are as changeable as a weather-cock—as weak as a girl—as false as a . . . ”

“Hardress ! Hardress !”

“Go along—I shall say more than I wish to do, before long ears, there. Get out, both of you, and let me have my room to myself. And you, sir, do you hear?—Down stairs, like a base scullion knave, as you are—black your master's boots when he orders you, and learn to behave yourself.”

Albert stood irresolute, looking wistfully at his friend—a look to have subdued the lion in his fury—but Hardress saw it not. He would not see it—he would not look at Albert.

“I have said,” he repeated; and, turning sullenly away, went into a small adjoining room, where his bed stood, and shut the door after him.

Albert remained silent. Stung he was to the quick; wounded to the heart; astonished at an attack so unexpected, and at violence to him so new. He had seen Hardress rude, rough,

and unjust to others; perhaps, the exception in favour of himself was one reason of his great love for the Viking.

He turned at last to Eugene.

“ I told you from the first, how it would be, if you would not bring down your stupid pride, and submit to what everybody else submits to in their turn. What mighty harm would it have done you, if you had toasted a muffin? Alfred the Great toasted cakes. Such nonsense! Making a fuss about *such* things!—and much you’ve got by it! You have to black shoes and boots, instead, you see.”

“ He!—He can’t make me.”

“ I’m afraid you’ll find he can.”

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The coolness between Hardress and Albert continued. It was plain that each suffered greatly under this alienation—but Faulconer evidently much the most of the two. His feelings were intense. Hardress was of a

harder and more stubborn nature, and the way he carried himself was enough to break a heart like Albert's.

Such invincible coldness, united to such invincible composure ! He neither seemed ruffled nor concerned, at that which was wringing Albert's heart. But this calm could not last long. Hardress persisted in his determination to break Eugene's spirit ; and had recourse to measures of so much severity, not to say cruelty, that Albert again interfered.

He spoke passionately, and almost insultingly, for he was stung nearly to madness, by the cool indifference of Hardress's manner. But his representations had a good effect, at least in one way. Hardress was already beginning to be worn out by the heroic resolution, for really it deserves that name, with which Eugene maintained his determination to preserve himself from what he thought degrading. It was the struggle of pride against pride—but the pride of resistance has something in it which commands our sympathies, whilst the

pride of oppression excites universal disgust. The sympathies of Hardress himself, even—for, though violent, jealous, and sullen-tempered, he was not ungenerous in the main—were excited by the astonishing fortitude of his victim.

He was not sorry for an excuse to give in.

“Very well,” he said—“I see how it is—I see where it all lies. I’ve done—I’ve done,” he cried, raising his voice. “And for this once, and for the last time in my life, I give way for your sake, Albert—*For your sake*. It is the parting sacrifice to a friendship that I thought would last for life—but which I now discard from my heart for ever. I see what you’re worth—I have learned to value the man, who, on the first occasion that presents itself of playing the fine fellow at his expense, forsakes an old friend, without a feeling of remorse—without one poor regret of nature!—and all for the sake of a foolish girl, and a proud, conceited puppy of a boy!”

“No, no,”—as Albert endeavoured to speak.

"It's no use explaining, and explaining. He insulted me, and you backed him."

"Oh, Hardress! Backed him!"

"You did! you did! And the whelp has triumphed. Yes, it's no use denying it—he *has* triumphed, and it's all because he knew you'd back him. So, I am the laughing-stock of the house! Can't reduce my own fag, a baby like that, to obedience! Well, well—it's the letting out of water. Radcliffe will insult me next, and you'll back him, I suppose—but that one must excuse in you—he has a heavy fist, has Radcliffe."

But at this last insult, Albert's eye flashed fire—his face became crimson.

"You *dare* say that to me? You have the *heart* to say that, to me,"—his voice trembling, as he pronounced the last of the two sentences.

"Heart! who talks of hearts?" cried Hardress. "I don't pretend to understand such fine things. I know when I think myself ill-used—and I know what I ought to expect

for the future, I believe. *Dare* not say it! I *dare*, and repeat it—Radcliffe has a heavy fist—and some of us are quite aware of the fact.”

“Say that again, when you see me deserve it—Farewell, Hardress.”

His face was working with emotion—which he strove in vain to suppress; he looked wistfully back, as he was about to leave the room—but Hardress would not give in—no, not by offering the slightest sign of conciliation—and so they parted.

The persecution of Eugene from that time, however, ceased—but Hardress treated him no longer as his fag. He sent him to Coventry; never spoke to, or took the least notice of him. His powerful protection being withdrawn, Eugene was in danger of becoming the butt and tease-mark of the rest of the house party, for his pride, and haughty reserve, had, in spite of his acknowledged talents, rendered him excessively unpopular.

Radcliffe, more especially, seemed to take a peculiar pleasure in tormenting him, by every in-



vention in his power; intermingling his sarcasms with indirect insinuations against his master, for his weakness and want of pluck, in having suffered himself to be conquered by such a baby. He also amused himself with uttering all sorts of inuendos against Albert, whose interference he chose to attribute to certain mean considerations of self-interest; for he had learned the family connection between the Faulconers and the Aubreys, and he knew pretty well the relative value of the two estates.

This went on with impunity for some little time, for Albert was too much absorbed by his own feelings—too deeply hurt at Hardress, to care for anything else. He, indeed, came very little among us; and, having lost his friend, with him seemed to have lost the taste for any other society. He used to be fond of me—though of course I came second in everything to Hardress—but now, he seemed quite to dislike communication. It only embittered his feelings to appear to sympathise with them, far more to attempt anything in the way of

consolation—as for compensation, it was utterly out of the question. He was deeply, deeply hurt. He felt himself ill-used—treated with the most monstrous injustice, by the friend he had loved with such entire affection ; and his resentment was serious, as his attachment had been. He never mentioned the name of Hardress, nor once alluded to their quarrel—and I believe, that had I offered myself in the vain character of mediator between them, I should have had still more difficulty in bringing Albert round, than in making Hardress reasonable. It was one of those cases where the person to blame had exhausted his passion, by giving way to all its injustice and violence—but where the person injured had found no such relief.

The sense of injustice rankled in Faulconer's bosom. Characters that feel intensely as he did, are acutely sensible to injustice ; most especially from those they love ; and they, perhaps, find it more difficult to forgive in

such cases, than upon any other occasion for resentment which can arise in life.

So matters stood for a few days.

## CHAPTER XI.

Wondrous it is to see in diverse mindes,  
How diversely Love doth his pageants play,  
And shews His power in variable kindes ;

\* \* \* \* \*

But in brave sprite it kindles goodly fire,  
That to all high desert and honour doth aspire.

SPENCER.

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TIME appeared only to widen the breach between the two friends.

In fact, time, if it does not soften and lead to reconciliation, inevitably gives depth and consistency to what might have passed away in the passion of the hour ; as it certainly would have done in this case, had there been, as there ought to have been, relenting and candour on the part of Hardress. A little cool reflection

ought to have shown him the unjust violence of his conduct ; and made him understand, and allow for, the motives which had actuated Albert.

But jealousy, and a proud implacable temper, prevented any thing of the kind ; added to which, the deep wound his high spirit had received, in thus having been conquered by a mere boy, was exasperated by the constant presence of Eugene's cool, indifferent face, whilst the sarcastic insinuations of Radcliffe, and what he understood as covert sneers, upon the part of his other companions in the house, kept him in a constant state of bitterness, the most intense.

Hardress was admired and feared, but had never been loved ; and, though a certain awe and respect kept the others from openly affronting him, in any manner which might entitle him to notice and resent it (a thing he would have been very glad to find the opportunity of doing), yet, it was sufficient to keep him perpetually in hot water.

This continual irritation of his haughty

temper, only made Hardress the more unjust to Albert, whom he considered the principal cause of these unpleasant circumstances. He was also, I believe, secretly offended that Albert offered nothing in the form of apology or concession. He ought to have felt, and he, perhaps, did feel, that the apology should have come from himself; and that Albert had done nothing, which in any way demanded it on his side; but he had been so accustomed from his superior age and standing in the school—setting aside his naturally arbitrary temper—to assume a certain superiority, that an autocrat would have as soon thought of making excuses to a serf, as he to any one.

Albert was bold, generous, high-spirited, deeply sensitive to unkindness, and doubly so to injustice. That he felt himself in the right, in this instance, only increased his resentment, a fact in contradiction, by the way, of that most false and shallow maxim, ‘that we are only angry when we are in the wrong.’

The two, now, never exchanged a syllable.

They shunned every occasion for meeting, and appeared totally estranged.

For my own part, I did not wonder at this termination of the friendship. I had never understood the partiality Albert showed for Hardress; a young man greatly his inferior in all that constitutes the real worth of a character;—but he was dazzled, I believe, by the loftiness of the Viking—who certainly did, by his daring carriage, his high bearing, and proud self-assertion, manage to impose a good deal upon most of us. Hardress softened alone to Albert, and this distinction Albert felt warmly,—besides he had saved his life—risked his own to save him even in the moment of defeat!—And that Albert never forgot.

But I linger to tediousness, unwilling to approach the catastrophe.

One day, Albert chanced to be present (unperceived, it was, I believe), when Radcliffe began to indulge in some insolent, sarcastic remarks upon Hardress, whom he alike envied and hated. Envied for the high place he held

among us—a place which Radcliffe, from his superior size, strength, and age, and above all, his unrivalled pre-eminence in the art of boxing, considered as rightly belonging to him. Moreover, he hated him, because of the kind of lofty contempt, with which Hardress chose to treat his superiority in mere brute force, as he disdainfully termed it.

It was a fine evening in the beginning of June. We were assembled in the common sitting-room ; Albert, seated on the window-sill, with his feet hanging into the garden outside, was engaged in reading. The heavy crimson moreen curtain had fallen from the pin that fastened it up, and so covered that portion of the window—and, therefore, as I said, I don't imagine that Radcliffe was aware that it was in the presence of his quondam friend and ally that he began this most outrageous and insolent attack upon Hardress.

Sneers — sarcasms — anecdotes — followed each other in rapid succession ; as heated with the theme, and excited by the ill-natured



laughter of many who were present, Radcliffe, for some time, went on—ending thus:—

“And, to crown all, in spite of his bullying airs, I believe he’s as arrant a coward as exists. He’ll thrash that boy, Eugene, to within an inch of his life—but no one will ever see him venture to attack me—and who dares say me nay, when I say so?”

The crimson curtain was torn back with violence, and Albert sprang into the room,—his eyes flashing, his face crimson.

“*I* dare, and *I* will—and I defy you—and call you liar to your face—Liar you are, and you know you are. Hardress is as brave and as generous as a lion—you all of you know it,” looking round with the most withering contempt,—“and yet you are all ready to laugh, and applaud that insolent bully, who envies and hates him, because he knows, as you all know, Hardress is worth a thousand Radcliffes—and the rest of you tied together.”

The words burst from him in such a torrent of passion, that Radcliffe did not even attempt

to interrupt him—though becoming perfectly livid with rage.

“Liar!”—he muttered between his teeth.

“Yes! Liar!”—shouted Albert—“Liar!”—and you know it—and it is you that are afraid of *him*, not he of *you*. You have told lies of him behind his back—you dare as soon fling yourself into the eternal fire, as say what you have said, before his face.”

“Dare!—We shall see that. Do you think I dare challenge you?”

“I don’t know how that may be—I said you dare not fight *him*!—as for me, I dare to challenge *you*—and I do it now—but, for Hardress, what I have said, that I stand by, and will to within an inch of my life—you *dare* not fight him.”

Radcliffe expressively doubled his formidable fist.

“We’ll try you first,” said he.

But Stanley and one or two others, who had joined readily enough in the attack upon Hardress, now came forward. No one loved Hardress—every one loved Albert.

“No—no—no. It’s not fair. It can’t be—the odds are against you—No—no—you’ve no chance with Radcliffe—besides, it’s no use. Listen to reason, Radcliffe. It’s Hardress, he said you dare not fight—I say you dare, and that you’ll most likely thrash him ; but as to Albert—who thought you dare not have a turn with Albert. Why, man, you’d eat him up, bones and all, in three seconds. No—no—Albert, be quiet—it’s no use challenging *him*—You can’t fight with a sling and a stone, like little David—and he’d annihilate you with one blow. Let Hardress fight his own battles.”

“He has insulted my friend behind his back—and he shall answer it to *me*. I’m not going to hinder Hardress from fighting his own battles, which he’s ready enough and able enough to do—and *will*, when that dastardly liar and slanderer dares to repeat that before his face, which he’s just said behind his back—but what *has* been said, was said before me—his friend, that once was, whatever we may be

now. I hold myself insulted in him, and in myself, and I challenge the bully, and will fight him. He may kill me, if he can."

Stanley was a good-hearted fellow; he shuddered at the danger to which Albert was exposing himself. — It was no imaginary one. — A regular fight upon a challenge was a rare, but a very serious, matter. It would, he knew, thus formally engaged in, be carried on according to the rules of the ring. Radcliffe, he was certain, would pursue the advantage his superior strength and science would afford him, with the most unrelenting disregard of consequences; and a limb, or an eye—or life itself—might be sacrificed to his blind fury, when engaged in a regular battle.

He attempted to interfere in vain, for Albert put an end to remonstrance, by leaping out of the window, and engaging in a game of hockey just as if nothing were the matter.

Radcliffe was sullen and obstinate, and refused every plan to bring the matter to some compromise.

“Why, you’ll kill him,” said Stanley—“and then what will they do to you?”

“Expel me—and, perhaps, hang me—I don’t care, I’ll have my revenge out of that rascal.”

“But, Radcliffe, consider. — It’s a poor revenge—It’s no revenge—It will disgrace you to fight one so greatly your inferior—no honour to be got in that way—If it had been Hardress, now, *that* would have been something like—you are more of a match—I believe you’d thrash him—but it would cost you a tug—and we’d all be glad and rejoice when you’d given that insolent fellow a fall. But, Albert!—He’s such a fine fellow.—Why, *this* is all for his friend, you see — you’d not have a man sit by to hear his friend abused!—It’s a bad cause; you have not got the rights of it—we’ll none of us back it—but challenge Hardress, and we’re all with you.”

“When I have disposed of his friend, the fine Phœbus—him with the glistening hair,”—said Radcliffe, with more attempt at poetry

than was usual with him—"we'll see what's to be done with the other."

Stanley perceived that all remonstrance was useless.—He knew it would be equally vain to attempt it with Albert. Radcliffe left the room, and the rest dispersed. Stanley stood looking out of the window, his mind full of anxious and perplexing thoughts. There, before him, were the hockey players—Albert, the most agile and gay of the group;—but alas!—how lithe! how light! how slender!—what a contrast to the powerful Radcliffe?

Suddenly a thought struck him.

He put on his hat and went to the playing fields, where he was told Hardress was. He found him sitting under some lofty trees in a remote part of the ground, teaching tricks to a French poodle he had lately bought.

"There—sir—now—sir—again, sir—very well, sir!—capital! capital!"—and he patted the little artist upon the head, who looked up, wagging his tail, seeming as much delighted with praise, as any child could have been.

“ You’re teaching your dog,” — began Stanley.

Hardress looked up.

“ I suppose I may teach my dog, without it mattering to you,” — was his rough answer.

“ Certainly — and I beg your pardon if I interrupted such agreeable company.”

“ Dogs are better company than men, according to my view of things,” — said Hardress ; and he returned to his occupation. — “ Again ! — leap ! — one, two — now beg my pardon, for you’ve done it wrong, my fine fellow — ha ! — ha ! ” — as the dog, on hind legs, held up his paws with a most ridiculous pathos of attitude.

“ It looks well,” cried Stanley, with some heat — “ to be teaching your poodle nonsense — when a friend of yours is on the brink of destruction.”

“ A friend of mine ! — I have not a friend in the world, thank heaven ! — The bubble has burst, and I have done with the shallow, meaningless name, for ever.”

“One who was once your friend, then—one who *is* your friend still, whatever you may be to him.—Hardress, if you don’t interfere, Albert Faulconer will be damaged for life, and I am come to tell you that you may prevent it.”

“I don’t meddle in his affairs,”—replied Hardress, coldly.

“You don’t!—but you will, when you hear all.—Hardress, we all think of you—I need not tell you exactly how, but, at all events, you’re not a brute beast, like Radcliffe—and, above all, you’re no dastard ; you won’t let another—you won’t let Albert, stand in your place, and perish in a quarrel, which is properly your own.”

Hardress started up.

“Perish!—Quarrel!—Radcliffe!—Albert ! You don’t mean—what *do* you mean?—Albert has not got into a quarrel with Radcliffe—He’s not going to fight *him*—Oh, heaven of heavens!”

“Yes, but he has got into a quarrel with Radcliffe—and for your sake, Hardress. Rad-



cliffe hates him because he's always defending you—but I believe he did not know he was in the room when he fell to abusing you, just now, till Albert came flashing in, all in a blaze. Such a glorious fellow that Celestial is!—and called him liar and slanderer to his face, and defied him, and challenged him for your sake.”

The pale face of Hardress coloured all over; and those stern blue eyes of his were suddenly overcast; tears were in them, but they did not fall. He roughly drove them back with his hand.

“Challenged him!—They're not going to fight—Radcliffe will never be such a brute as to fight *him*.”

“He will, though,”

“He won't, though!” cried Hardress; and he strode away without a syllable more.

He met Radcliffe just entering the playing-grounds, and immediately insulted him—not only by words but by action.

“I mean to insult you—for a coward and a shameless liar!—Shameless liar—that you

blacken the characters of absent men !—Coward !—that you dare fight Albert Faulconer, and fear to challenge *me* !”

“ Fear to challenge *you*—Do I ?—Here goes then—I challenge you now—Only let me have done with that fellow, first—and then I’ll serve *you* out.”

“ You will serve me out in his place, if you are a man—You will fight me, who are your equal in size and strength—but you shall give me your word of honour—if honour you have—that, whatever be the event of our battle, you will refuse to meet Albert.”

Radcliffe was not sorry for the proposal. He had already been made to feel how much he should lose in public opinion, by fighting Albert ! and he was not sorry to get off handsomely by accepting Hardress in his place—the more so, because the somewhat imprudent defiance Albert had made before witnesses, in his friend’s name, rankled in his bosom, and he had determined to seize the first opportunity to challenge him.

“Be it so,” he said, sulkily—“time and place.”

“Our seconds will settle that—Albert will be mine.”

“Hey day!—I thought you were no longer friends!”

“I don’t conceive that is a matter with which you have any concern.”

And so they parted.

The next day was a half-holiday, and upon the afternoon of that day the combat was to take place.

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Hardress returned grave and thoughtful to his own room. Eugene happened to be there.

“Eugene,” he said, addressing him, now for the first time since his rupture with Faulconer—“I’ve been, as you think, hard with you—I don’t think so—It’s the way of us all, and we’re the better for it—It does young fellows of your inches no harm to be taught to

do what they don't like.—Man, it's the great lesson—the business of life turns upon it—but you don't understand me.”

“ Yes, I do—and if I'd thought there'd been kindness at the bottom of it, it wouldn't have put me up as it did—I don't care a muffin for toasting a muffin—but I think it's beneath my father's son to do it because I'm afraid of a thrashing—He's a dastard, who obeys through fear.”

“ You're not altogether wrong, there—Let by-gones be by-gones—I don't think I'm going to stay very long here—and I would rather go away friends with everybody.”

“ I'm sure I'm ready to be friends—and now you speak fair, I'll toast your muffin to-morrow, Hardress—see if I don't.”

“ That's spoken like a brave fellow—If I stay here, we shall understand each other better in future—Aye, you *shall* toast my muffin *to-morrow*,—but that's the last office of the sort I'll ever ask you to perform for me, if I stay here a hundred years—You are not of that sort of stuff—We'll go to our lexicons again, eh?”

Eugene's face showed that he was touched by this speech.

"I will obey the customs of the school, as Albert says I ought to do, and think no shame, order what you will. Next half, I shall have done with fagging, as you'll see."

Hardress shook his head.

"Where's Albert?"

"I don't know—I think he's on the river."

"I want to speak with him."

"That's right!" cried Eugene, with more than usual animation—"Shall I go and look for him?"

"Do, that's my fine fellow."

Eugene went away.

Hardress might have asked, with Macbeth, 'How is it with me when every sound unmans me.'—Not that his conscience was ill at ease. He felt that he had acted the right and generous part. To shield the friend of other days, still dearly loved in spite of all—from what he knew to be a real danger, he had rushed to the rescue, and offered himself in his place.

It is true, the peril was less in his own case. He was of a much larger and more powerful frame than Albert Faulconer, and far better skilled in the noble science of offence and defence ;—but to meet Radcliffe was a formidable thing. Not that there seemed reason to anticipate any very serious consequences, anything worse than defeat and very severe treatment. At worst, he might be in the hospital a month after it—yet his heart was unusually heavy.

At first, he tried to shake off the depression—but at length he yielded to it.—These sort of presentiments, be they justified by the event or not, have an insuperable power over the spirits. They appear, at the time, so like intuitions—they so force themselves on the mind, with the authority of truth, that there are moments when even the least superstitious find them irresistible.

The presentiments of Hardress were vague and undefined, but they were of some heavy impending evil—in what form to come, the

foreboding voice said not ; it might be that of disgrace, expulsion, his father's deep displeasure and his mother's cruel distress ; it might be a forecast of ruptured ties—of severe misfortune to himself or Albert—last of all, came a dark shadow, as of death.

One wish pressed upon him with a strange force. He, so cold and so haughty,—so unforgiving when injured, and implacable when offended,—so indifferent to popularity, and reckless of enmity,—now felt the most unappeasable desire to be at peace with all the world.

As he walked up and down his little sitting-room, deep in thought, he began to recollect all to whom he had given offence, and those with whom he thought he had cause to be offended. He could not humble himself in person,—that was a condescension impossible to his proud heart—Only with Eugene and Albert could he make in this manner, the attempt to come to a better understanding ;—but he did this—He took out his writing-desk, and wrote a few lines

conciliating to every one that he was upon ill terms with, asking pardon of those whom he thought he had ill-treated, and offering it to such as he thought had wronged him.

Having done this, his spirits felt somewhat relieved—He locked up his desk, put the key in his pocket, and then he went to the window, and began to watch for Albert.

It was, as I said, a fine evening in June. His window looked towards the river—Myriads of boats of all sorts and sizes, were skinning gaily along the water.—He fancied he saw Albert, himself, urging his light skiff swiftly along, and this brought to his remembrance the day when the Celestial had won the match. With a species of self-abhorrence, never felt before, he now recollected the ungenerous and bitter feelings his own defeat had given birth to in his heart ; but then arose the bright recollection, like a sun-beam piercing the blackened clouds—and he saw himself dashing into the water, and saving the envied victor's life, at the peril of his own.



So passed an hour—two hours—but no Albert came.

At last Eugene reappeared.

“ Well—where’s Albert ? ”

“ Gone to bed—He says he can’t come.”

“ What did you say ? ”

“ Say — Nothing — but that you’d sent me to fetch him—but he said he was tired with rowing, and was going to bed, and couldn’t come.”

“ Has he cut me, then, entirely ? ”

“ Yes, I suppose so,” said Eugene—“ but nobody thought you cared much about it—and I’m sure Albert doesn’t.”

“ You’re sure of that ? ”

“ Yes, I’ve heard him say so to Lenham ! ”

“ Is he in bed ? ”

“ No.”

“ Go, and ask him—stay, take him this.”

And he scrawled upon a morsel of paper—

“ Come to me, that’s a good old fellow—I am in a curious sort of humour—I’m forgiving all the world, and I want you to forgive me.”

It was enough, and ten thousand times more than enough; the generous Albert was in Hardress's room in a second, and ready to throw himself at his feet.

“No—no,” cried Hardress—“It was all my own fault—all my own violence and injustice—but you won't think anything more of it—'cause, as how, I've a favour to ask of you—and if you can do me a good turn, that'll set all right, *I* know.”

It was a delicate compliment — Albert felt it. The colour flew high in his cheek—and the water rose to those too ready eyes—only glistened there, however, not a drop fell.

He caught Hardress by the hand.

And that was all that passed.—English lads are not demonstrative—or rather not given to express their feelings in many words—a brief sentence and a significant action or two, and all is understood.

“And now, what am I to do for you?”

“Why, stand second—or rather bottle-holder to me. You don't know, perhaps,

that Radcliffe and I, have a fight to-morrow."

"You and he!"

"Yes—he insulted me—and so we're going to have it out."

When?—how?—why?"

"Never you mind when—how—or why—for I was in such an infernal rage, that I've forgot all *I* said, and *he* said. What I know is this—It comes off to-morrow—and you're to stand my second."

"I!—Why I'm to fight him, myself, first."

"You!—Pooh! — Nonsense, Albert!—you might as well do—what I shall I say—anything most absurd."

"But I shall, and I mean to thrash him."

"Pooh! pooh!—Wait till I've done with him."

"He never said a word about it. I defied him to dare challenge you—Oh, fool!—fool!—and now he has done it—fool!—fool!—worse than fool! Oh, Hardress, forgive me! What business had I to bring your name up?"

“Nonsense—yours happened this afternoon, eh? This of mine is an old score—so I take precedence of you.”

Albert was scarcely to be pacified—until, at last, Hardress succeeded in persuading him to believe that he had no concern in the challenge; and, his mind, for the present, relieved from that bitter apprehension, he set himself, with a cheerfulness belonging to the thoughtless age of manhood yet in its dawning, to prepare everything for the ensuing event.

He does not seem, at that time, to have had a doubt but that Hardress would come off victorious. His faith in his friend's strength and skill was unbounded; he expected Hardress to conquer in every trial of strength or address—and so, indeed, he most often did.

As regarded himself, he knew well that it was impossible that the result of his fight should be a triumph over the bravo. He had made up his mind to bear a sound thrashing with the heroism of a Spartan—satisfied that the honour of having ventured to oppose, would a

thousand times outweigh the disgrace of a defeat from one so much more powerful than himself. He made up his own mind upon the subject, so soon as Hardress had succeeded in convincing him that the priority as first challenger, belonged to himself, in the natural course of things ; and, with a secret resolve to have his turn so soon as Radcliffe had recovered from the sound beating he anticipated for him, he gave himself up to the part he felt called upon to act with alacrity.

As he now understood, or rather misconceived the case, it was impossible to suppose that Hardress would consent to draw back, or suffer Albert to precede him ; so he gave up any further attempt to assert his claim, or dissuade his friend from what he was evidently resolved upon—and it was, indeed, according to all the laws of honour, as maintained by the community to which they belonged, unavoidable.

## CHAPTER XII.

Mine honour keeps the weather of my fate,  
Life, every man holds dear ; but the brave man  
Holds honour far more precious, dear, than life.

SHAKESPEARE.

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It is four o'clock, on a bright, beautiful afternoon, of this said month of June.

The sky is clear and blue without a cloud ; the sun declining, and casting a mellow delicious light upon the oaks of the playing fields ; upon the hoary towers of Windsor Castle, and the distant woods of the Great Park ; shedding upon every object, an almost heavenly loveliness.

It is a half-holiday, and the playing fields are crowded.

There is an unusual stir and excitement, however, going on among the crowd. Much whispered conversation, and then a dark mass of figures are seen gradually defiling towards a remote field, completely hidden from view by tall hedges, and hedge-row trees.

It communicated with the playing fields by a style; and, though not strictly in bounds, was much frequented.

How sweet and still the evening draws on; the nightingales are singing—the cuckoo shouting—the stilly hum of suppressed voices, rises from the playing fields—the huge clock at Windsor Castle, goes four and three-quarters.

There is a ring formed, and now the combatants stand prepared for action; eying each other, as if measuring each other's strength.

Radcliffe's, as the immense muscular force of his arms is exposed, seems that of a Hercules. The spectators begin to turn a little pale, and to shiver, for every heart beats for Hardress. His brave challenge has secured for him universal popularity.

Albert, alone, is fearless; confident in the skill of his friend.

He seemed infatuated—he *was* infatuated—His conviction that Hardress would triumph, was only to be compared to the passionate desire, with which he looked forward to seeing his friend victorious.

The glory of subduing Radcliffe!—It was all that was wanted to complete the many triumphs, which had elevated Hardress, as regarded prowess, to such a high place in public opinion.

Stanley, and the rest, looked anxiously on. For myself, I abhorred and detested such exhibitions; and, far from being present, I was at that moment rowing down the river, to the greatest distance possible from the odious scene.

I had not interfered—I had not attempted to persuade either Albert or Hardress, to abstain from what I thought such a brutal trial of strength. I knew it would be as vain as an attempt to restrain the winds. Upon these matters, their code of honour differed



altogether from mine. Albert already triumphed, in the approaching triumph of his friend; and I found, that even to hint the least doubt upon the subject, threw him into a strange passion. Indeed, through the whole of that fearful day, he appeared to me excited to a most unnatural degree. Had we been living in the old heathen times, of which we learned so much in our studies, I should have believed the demon of discord had taken possession of him.

Hardress seemed infected by the enthusiasm of Albert.

The depression of the evening before had disappeared, and I was told he looked as haughty and unmoved, as usual; and, in his cool way, as secure of victory, as his ardent and fiery companion.

I am not going to distress you, with the details of the odious contest.

Alas! before many rounds were over, it was plain where the victory was to lie.

Radcliffe had the advantage in skill, as well

as in bodily weight and power. And Hardress went down—again—and again—and again—till there was a general cry of “Hold—enough! Give in, Hardress!—give in—you’ve no chance.”

“Brandy—brandy!” faintly ejaculated Hardress, as he lay across Albert’s knee.—“Give in!—Not while the breath is in my body—Albert—Brandy.”

“No, don’t give it him, Faulconer—you’ll kill him. Make him give in—make him give in—he’s had enough.”

“Yes, he’s had enough,” shouted Radcliffe, with a scornful laugh.—“If he hasn’t, I’m ready—quite ready, for a little more; but I think I’ve given the gentleman his fill—though some, maybe, might have taken one more turn, before they’d cry ‘Hold!’”

Hardress started up.

“Let him kill me, Albert!—But whilst I can stand, I’ll meet him.”

There was a general shout of applause. Stanley, alone, looked grave.

“The brandy!”

The fatal bottle was handed to Hardress by his second. He took a large gulp—and was in the ring again.

“Are you mad, Albert? Why did you let him go in again?”—but Albert’s eyes were flashing like lightning.

And now there is a shout—a very scream of exultation.

It was his last blow—his last despairing blow—but now Radcliffe had begun to grow careless, and to despise his adversary. It was the last despairing blow. It took Radcliffe just under the ear—and down—whilst a shout from the by-standers seemed to rend the heavens—the giant fell.

Hardress staggered back, and sank senseless into the arms of his second.

“He doesn’t move.—Sure, he’s not dead!—See how odd he looks—let him alone—don’t touch him. Send for the doctor. No—no—he’ll peach. Get some water, and throw it in his face—can’t you, any of you? He’s not.

dead—No—no he's coming to—why, Radcliffe, man!—can't you give one a sign?—Are you dead or alive?" broke from the confusion of voices.

A heavy groan.

"All's right—get some water. Stay—give him a drop of brandy. No, water's best.—Throw it in his face. It was a rare blow—right under his ear. It's a mercy it's not done for him, though."

Gradually Radcliffe recovered from the stunning effects of the blow he had received.—Slowly the giant arose from the earth, assisted by his companions; but his head was still swimming and confused.—Blinded and stupid, it was impossible he could come to time.

But the victory could scarcely be said to belong to Hardress either. He still lay, insensible, across Albert's knee.

Albert sat there, watching the swelled and distorted face of his friend, and anxiously expecting when he should recover himself a little. It was a shocking spectacle—I will

not distress you with it. He was scarcely to be recognized—and the slight clothing he wore was soaked in blood.

Stanley alone stood by; the rest were gathered round Radcliffe, really frightened at the state he was in. It was new to them—the state in which Hardress lay after a contest such as this was a no unusual sight.

“What shall we do?” asked Stanley—“He doesn’t come round as he ought—we’d best get him to my dame’s and to bed. Have you any water there?”

“No, only the brandy.”

“Give us the bottle—There’s none of that left; he must have taken it all down in the last gulp—a famous gulp it was, and a thrice famous blow he gave on the strength of it; but I wish he’d come round.”

“Hardress! How is it with you, man?” said Albert, bending down, and speaking as tenderly as a woman could have done—“Cheer up—You’ve done it—you’ve floored him—He’s carried off the field.”

Hardress seemed not to hear him—he faintly moved, and faintly groaned.

“ Oh, he’ll soon come round,” said one, named Senhouse—a boy experienced in these sort of encounters—“ Oh, it’s nothing—I’ve seen fellows a thousand times worse than that—No bones broke—only a bloody nose and a black eye. Carry him to bed—and here—here’s my bottle of brandy—give him another dose—there’s nothing like brandy”—and, opening Hardress’s lips, he poured an additional quantity down his throat.

The application only seemed to increase the stupor.

“ There—Let’s carry him away, and smuggle him into bed, or there’ll be the d—’l and all to pay soon,” said Senhouse.

They assembled a sufficient number of hands—a sort of litter was made of neck-shawls and handkerchiefs: and so Hardress was got to his dame’s, and into his bed, without any person but those immediately concerned being aware of the state he was in.

“If he would but speak,” said Albert, anxiously.

“Pooh, man!—They never do—Only let him alone,” said Senhouse—“Let him have a good sleep—Come along, they’re calling absence over—we’ll be missed. We must say Har-dress has gone to bed with the headache—He’ll be all right in a day or two.”

“I think we ought not to leave him in this way,” said Stanley.

“I’m not going to leave him,” cried Albert :  
“Do you think I am?”

“Yes, I do think you are,” cried Senhouse, authoritatively; “If you stay away, too—it’ll get wind—and we shall all be expelled, or something of that sort.—Faulconer, it’s not like you to play us such an ill turn as that.”

With this kind of arguments—with a repetition of which I will not trouble—Albert, who dreaded nothing so much as the imputation of treachery to his companions; or the being the means of getting any one of them into a scrape, was persuaded to come away;—

and the more easily, as Hardress began to snore heavily ; and Senhouse asserted that all was right now, for he was fallen fast asleep.

When Hardress did not answer to his name, Senhouse spoke for him, and accounted for his absence by saying, he had a dreadful headache, and was gone to bed, but would be in his place the next morning.

After they came out of the school-room, Senhouse fastened himself upon Albert, to prevent him from going to disturb his friend. He did this, I really believe, with a perfectly honest intention, for he knew by experience that there was nothing like a good night's rest, after adventures of this nature.

Albert yielded, sorely against his will. He was restless and uneasy. There was that about Hardress's look which alarmed him, in spite of all Senhouse could say. However, he suffered himself to be over-persuaded ;—for he was himself become weak, nervous,—confused, and excessively miserable, in consequence of the dreadful scene he had gone through.



About eight o'clock he came to me;—I had just returned.—He told me what had passed, and that he did not like Hardress's look.

I was frightened when I heard of the snoring.

"I hope you did not leave him alone," said I.

"Yes, we did—Senhouse said it was the best thing we could do."

"Have you been to see him since?"

"No—they would not let me. They said it was best to let him sleep it out."

"Let us go now."

We entered the house.

All was profoundly quiet.

Everybody was out enjoying themselves this lovely evening, and not a creature to be found in the usually busy scene.

The shocking spectacle of a few hours ago seemed already forgotten by every one. All the boys were engaged at their usual evening diversions.

The shout and laugh might be heard from the distant playing fields—and cheering and

cheerful cries from the river, upon which the garden belonging to my dame's house bordered.

But the interior of the house seemed almost ominously still. My dame herself happened to be out that day—a rare occurrence—she was gone to meet a wedding party at Salt Hill.

I felt anxious, and hastened up to Hardress's rooms. His bedroom, as I have told you, was a little slip opening out of his sitting room.

The sitting room was, of course, empty. The window was open, and the cheerful voices from without came pleasantly in. The sun was now just setting, and casting his glorious beams upon a scene of loveliness, which has remained, I scarce know why, impressed upon my memory ever since.

That silver river!—The overhanging trees! —The purple hills, clothed with the forest woods!—The extraordinary beauty of the sky!

Oh, what a world of love seemed written in the characters of that sky.

We came in stealthily—Albert treading with the utmost caution, and seeming almost afraid to breathe, lest he should disturb the sleeper.

He laid his hand upon the lock of the bedroom door, turned it with infinite care, so as not to make the slightest noise—opened the door a little, and listened.

“He has done that heavy snoring now—he seems sound asleep—perhaps we’d better not disturb him.”

I crept silently to the door, and listened, too.

There was, certainly, no heavy snoring, now. The room seemed almost awfully still.

“Listen, Albert—Do you hear him breathe?”

“No, I can’t hear him breathe—but they make such a confounded noise out there.”

I stole across the room, and quietly shut the window.

Then I came back and listened.

“Can you hear him breathe, now?”

“No,” he whispered, “He’s in a sweet sleep—Hadn’t we better go away?”

But I put my ear to the narrow opening of the door—in vain.

Not a sound.

My heart began to beat in a strange manner.

“I think,” I faltered out in almost an inarticulate whisper, “you had better let me steal in, and have a look at him.”

He saw the change in my countenance, I believe, and he began to look uneasy.

He opened the door wider, yet still with the utmost precaution.

But there was no breathing sound.

I entered, and looked at the bedclothes.

They did not move!

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Hardress lay with his face towards the wall, his fine light hair, now all dabbled in blood, tumbled about his head.

He lay there, just as they had laid him down. He did not appear to have moved since.

There was neither sound nor motion.

The bedclothes heaved not. The death-like stillness was unbroken.

I stepped up to the bed, stooped down, and looked into his face, which was turned away.

I saw at once how it was.

For a few seconds I was as if paralysed.

“What’s the matter—what’s the matter?”—whispered Albert, eagerly—“What’s the matter—he’s asleep, isn’t he?”

“Yes—yes—He’s at rest.”

“But you are trembling, and shivering all over—What’s the matter—Let *me* have a look.”

“No—You had better not.”

And I covered the face with the sheet.

“What are you about?—Are you mad?”—cried Albert, yet still subduing his voice—“You’ll smother him.”

“No—No—Come away—Come into the next room, Albert—Come away.”

But, as a flash of lightning, the truth seemed to burst upon him.

He pushed me from him, tore down the sheet—hurriedly looked into the face;—and, roaring, rather than shouting—“Oh, God of Heaven!”—fell, as insensible as the corpse before him, on the bed.

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It was a dreadful, dreadful night that succeeded—a night never, never to be forgotten.

The fearful horror written upon every face—The stern and troubled countenances of the masters, who were summoned immediately upon the return of my dame—The going and coming—the doctor summoned—only to confirm the truth, and shake his head—And, at intervals, the wailings and shrieks of Albert, heard from a distant room.

Oh, it was awful.

Death is ever, ever awful—but such a

death! — So sudden! — So overwhelming! mixed up with such circumstances of folly, sin, and wrong.

Everybody felt wrong.

Every one connected in the slightest degree with the dreadful event felt they had done wrong.

My dame kept crying and tormenting herself, and vowing that never, never whilst she lived, would she accept a single invitation during term.—The masters were feeling, and justly feeling, that some way or other such things ought not to have been possible.—Every boy or young man that had made one in the fatal ring, conscience-struck and remorseful, beat his breast.

How Radcliffe felt upon the occasion, no one knew. He was confined to his bed himself. It was not till the next morning that they told him. He received the intelligence in sullen silence, uttering not a single syllable of remorse or sorrow.—He seemed preparing himself to meet the consequences of what he had

done, with a stoical indifference which had something in it of the grandeur of fortitude.

Even he was the better, I have reason to hope, for the shock—The rest of us, I am sure, were.

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I had called for help through the window of poor Hardress's sitting-room, and the fellows who were below in the garden, came rushing impetuously in.

Horror-struck they were. Every cheek was pale—every limb trembling—as, with hurried, nervous haste, they assisted me to raise the senseless form of Albert, as he lay stretched upon the body of his friend.

They carried him to his own bed, whilst I remained, vainly striving to discover some spark of life in poor Hardress.

Vainly, indeed! He was already cold—He must have been dead an hour or two—He probably expired soon after they left him.

Stanley ran for the apothecary, he was out,



and we could get no one until after my dame's return. In the meantime I exhausted all my little knowledge of such things, in attempting to restore sensation—but it was fruitless; and they came, at last, and asked me to go to Albert.

Fresh air, and water thrown into his face, had revived him. He awakened as from a deep sleep.

At first, he did not appear to know where he was, or to have the least recollection of what had happened; but gradually the mistiness of his perceptions began to clear away; one by one, the circumstances so lately passed, seemed to dawn upon him.

Suddenly he started up with a wild cry, and was rushing out of the room.

"Where are you going?" cried Stanley, catching hold of him.

"Let me go!—let me go!" he shrieked, passionately—"Oh! it's such a horrid—horrid dream."

"You can't go—you mustn't go—you're ill

yourself, my good fellow," said the kind Stanley, soothing him. "Be quiet—there's a good old fellow."

"Quiet!—What are you about? Let me go!"—violently struggling to break loose from the rest, who were striving to detain him by main force. "I shall go mad, if you don't—I must speak to him—I *will* speak to him. Oh, horrible!—horrible! I dreamed that he was dead!"

They were all silent. He looked anxiously, searchingly, into each face, one after the other. It was enough—and, oh! but his agony was fearful!

They came to fetch me.

As I entered the room, he uncovered his face, looked up into mine, and, with a cry scarcely human, rushed into my arms, and fainted away upon my bosom.

But, enough of this awful story.

Such things *have* been—but such things are not, I believe, cannot be, now.

This miserable event happened many, many

years ago. It was a fearful consequence of that system carried too far—of leaving the boys, when out of the school-room very much to themselves—a system, which, when *not* carried too far, forms, I believe, one of the most wholesome parts of the discipline of our public schools.

A discipline, which, upon the whole, however much it may lay itself open to hypothetical criticism—and however difficult altogether to defend in theory—in practice proves of a value, which no other plan has yet been found to equal.

Turning out *men*, rather than great scholars, it may be ; but giving a certain stamp of character for courage—generosity—self-government, and right reason, which, with all their many faults, may be called the distinctive attribute of English gentlemen.

I speak of these institutions as they have been modified and improved, during the last thirty years or so, through the exertions of those entrusted with their management. And,

though, doubtless, instances upon instances of failure might be quoted, it is my conviction, and, I believe, it will be found to be the fact, that where tolerable attention has been paid at *home*—and where home education is neglected, no seminary on earth can supply the deficiency—every man, without exception, who has had a public school education, rejoices in it—and feels its advantages throughout his life.

The fearful excess to which the liberty and freedom from supervision, allowed to the boys in play hours, had, in this terrible instance, extended—proved salutary in the correction of what had become the exaggeration of that which most, I believe, who consider the subject, will acknowledge as in itself a good thing.

Everyone felt this horrible affair, according to their different characters, and different relations. There was no want of sensibility in any, however, remotely concerned.

But alas! for the unhappy boys more immediately implicated.

Upon Albert the effect was terrible—His passionate regrets for his friend were poisoned by the acutest feelings of self-reproach.

It was in vain that we tried to console him, by endeavouring to prove that for the part he had taken he was not to blame. Conscience is not to be silenced—the voice divine will make itself heard—and most of all in these storms of human feeling.

He recollected his rashness in the defiance thrown out, which, as he understood the matter now, had provoked Radcliffe to the challenge. Then, that fatal bottle of brandy, was like a horrid spectre continually before him. He recollected but too distinctly the remonstrance of Stanley ; his own obstinacy in pouring the brandy down the throat of his fainting friend—and he believed, and alas ! with but too much appearance of reason, that the dreadful termination was occasioned by the administration of such an overwhelming stimulant, in the state in which Hardress then was.

When the first wild paroxysms of his grief

were over, these racking thoughts took entire possession of his mind. Albert Faulconer had a frame replete with joyous health—one which it seemed as if no fatigue could overcome—an elasticity of spirit no trouble could subdue. But what availed these good gifts now?—Before the evening of the next day he was confined to his bed, delirious with brain fever.

It was in this state impossible to move him, and, indeed, his excessive distress excited sympathy in the Masters themselves, gravely displeased as they were. He escaped the disgrace of expulsion. Sir John Faulconer was written to, and desired to remove his son from the school, so soon as he should be able to travel. His remorse for the share he had taken in the lamentable tragedy being such, that the authorities had thought it unnecessary, either as a warning to others, or as a means of making an impression upon himself, to resort to severer measures.

The coroner's inquest brought in a verdict of

manslaughter against Radcliffe, and he was committed for trial.

I have never happened to meet him again ; for, of course, he did not return to Eton. From what I have heard I have reason to fear, that this grievous catastrophe made no beneficial impression upon him.

Radcliffe was totally wanting in those advantages in his home education, which go so far in making the ultimate difference between man and man.

His father, devoted to the accumulation of wealth, without bound or measure, was of a low extraction, and very narrow education, himself, and had little idea of what constituted real worth—or what we mean by the true gentleman. But he well understood the omnipotence of wealth in this sordid mammon-worshipping world of ours—His son would inherit an enormous fortune—what mattered the rest ?

Such a man usually marries a woman of little more value than himself. A pretty, dressy, husband-hunting girl—belonging to a

family much in his own position—had in early days struck Mr. Radcliffe's fancy. The young lady well understood how to convert a nibble into a bite. She hooked her prey ; and from that hour every thought and aspiration of her heart were devoted to the object of attaining to those higher walks of fashion, upon which, in her maiden days, she had looked with such longing eyes. She had not an idea of a duty unconnected with the great social one—of getting forward—nor of an interest, except those belonging to the great world.

The race—and race is something, after all—from which Radcliffe sprang, was sordid, selfish, base—the rearing he received all false and wrong—his natural temper arrogant, violent, and tyrannical.

Alas ! what shall we say to these things ?  
Mystery of iniquity !—mystery of mysteries !  
Dark as the pitchy night of death.

Upon such a character, so circumstanced, even the dreadful warning he had received was valueless.



Against every rising feeling of remorse or pity he hardened himself.—The voice of conscience he stifled—public opinion he met with the resolute defiance of invincible pride.

He felt that he should triumph over the disadvantages which the exposure of the circumstances in a public trial would throw over him, and he did.

He was very rich—he was very bold—he was very strong—he was supremely insolent.

And everybody found excuses for him.

‘So the last state of that man was worse than the first.’

## CHAPTER XIII.

. . . . And wickedly backbite : her name men Slander  
call ;

Her nature is all goodness to abuse.

SPENCER.

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IMOGENE has now arrived at that sweet age when a lovely childhood ripens into something more sweet and lovely still.

Into girlhood, as we call it now—full womanhood, as it was considered in the days of our mothers or grandmothers—the days of Clarissa Harlowe and Miss Byron.

Thanks to the education she had received, and the unceasing efforts of Mr. Glenroy to call her faculties into action, she was very much formed for her age ; and the sweet young face

had a something of energy and high intelligence in it, which rendered it singular, as it was interesting and charming.

Her figure was light and active—grace itself in every movement. Not the artificial grace of the elegantly trained one, but the free, spontaneous, inimitable grace of a rarely excelling nature—that untaught grace, which, we may rely upon it, will never be found except as the cloathing and attendant upon the finest and purest qualities. It is for want of such qualities that we are obliged to substitute something more ordinary and conventional ; of which all one can say is, that it is vastly better than negligence and unculture.

Imogene was an exceptional being—she reminded one of the lines of Dryden—

Her pure and eloquent blood spoke in her cheeks ;  
And so distinctly wrought,  
You might have almost said her body thought.

She was so instinct with feeling and intelligence.

You forgot to call her beautiful—you forgot the symmetry of her form—the fine carving of those lovely features—those delicate hands—the light, fairy footstep—you forgot such mere material perfections in the all-pervading influence of her heart and mind.

You did not remark her mouth was beautiful, but how sweet and kind her smile—that her eyes were fine, but how bright with intelligence and love—that her attitudes were graceful, but what unaffected simplicity and gentleness throughout—that her hand was fine, but how softly it smoothed the sufferer's cheek.

I have her before me now ; I see her in all her brightness, goodness, truth, and love—like some sweet spirit of a better world, rather than as a woman.

She was one, and the only one I ever saw, that one did not delight to think ‘that she was a woman still.’

One rejoiced only, that she was herself, and yet not a veritable angel, but had her abode among the children of men.

What she felt when an account, though but an imperfect one, of what had happened at Eton, reached her, I do not think any one knew.

Her eyes were so red once or twice, that it excited Lady Emma's attention; and she kindly inquired into the cause of her tears; but Imogene seemed not to like to confess it. I believe, indeed, she dreaded the pain of hearing the subject discussed by any one—especially by a person whom she thought had not ever quite appreciated Albert.

Eugene had, of course, written an account of what had passed, but his narrative was brief and confused. He either did not understand how it had all happened, or did not chose to confess to his knowledge—or did not like the trouble of entering into particulars. The last reason being, perhaps, the most weighty of all.

Eugene's letter had been followed by one from Charlotte Faulconer, with the intelligence that her brother was ill of a nervous fever at

Eton, and that Lady Faulconer was gone to nurse him.

A few posts more brought a letter to Lady Emma from 'my dame,' informing her that Eugene, also, was dangerously ill. It was hoped and believed that his illness would prove to be the measles, but the medical men were very uneasy about him.

With my dame's letter came a very friendly one from Lady Faulconer. She alluded in few words to her son's illness, and to her own anxiety; but gave a detailed account of Eugene's state, and advised Lady Emma to come to him without delay. She added, that she thought it would be too melancholy, under the anxiety which she knew dear Imogene must be suffering on Eugene's account, to leave her alone at Haughton during her mother's absence, and said that she hoped, as she was in a sort of manner her aunt, and the two girls something like cousins, she might be allowed to go to Drystoke, and stay with the young people until Eugene should be out

of danger, and Lady Emma able to return home.

“Lady Faulconer is very kind, my love, to think of it. You would like to go to Drystoke, should you not? You will be very forlorn here.”

Imogene lifted up her head, and a bright ray broke through her tears—she had been weeping bitterly, upon hearing of Eugene’s danger.

“Dear Lady Faulconer! How kind of her, in all her distress, to think of me. Thank you, dear Mamma—I should like to go to Drystoke, if you please—I should be so unhappy whilst you were away.”

Her heart quite yearned to Drystoke. There, too, she should be at hand to hear the first intelligence of Albert.

“You know, my love, you will get my letters from Eton within a few hours—as early as you would have them here. I am glad you will go—it will be a relief to me to know that you are there—but I was afraid you would not

like it much, now your Aunt Ulick is gone—I don't think the Miss Faulconers can be particularly to your taste."

"I know so few girls," said Imogene—"that I have not much choice of friends, dear Mamma—and they are both very goodnatured to me—Laura is really a nice little thing—so loving and good-humoured."

"And she grows excessively pretty—But, enough of them—Ring, my dear, and let me give orders—We will both have luncheon, and by that time they will have packed what we want—and we can be off, our several ways, by two o'clock—Our darling Eugene!—Yet, I wonder at myself—In spite of all they say, I have no fear but we shall get him through."

As sometimes happens—the call for exertion had roused Lady Emma's spirits. She had so long and morbidly dwelt upon one particular class of anxieties, that, to have them exchanged, though it were but for another, was quite a relief. Then, Imogene's unaffected grief, and burst of tears, when she heard of



Eugene's danger, was precious balm to poor Emma's sore heart.

"May I read Lady Faulconer's letter, Mamma?" asked Imogene, timidly, as her mother rose to quit the room, leaving the letter lying upon her sofa table.

"Did I not give it you?—Yes, dear—read it by all means—It gives a more encouraging account of our darling Eugene than 'my dame's' does—Don't vex yourself, dear Moggie,"—coming back and kissing her—"don't cry your dear eyes out—He will be spared to us—I have no fear but he will—I wish," she added, "poor Lady Faulconer had as little cause for distress about Albert.—Thank heaven, illness is the only anxiety we have to suffer about our own Eugene—How well he must have managed to keep himself clear of this dreadful affair."

Imogene coloured, but her mother did not perceive it. She took up the letter. Over and over again did she read the few brief lines dedicated to the subject of Albert. Little satis-

faction could she gain from them, except from one short sentence—"You must suspend your judgment upon this lamentable affair until we meet—I will only now say, *en passant*—that distress for the loss of his friend, is the sole cause of my poor boy's illness.—He does not, and he has no reason, to feel self-reproach for the share he was forced to take."

That was all. But that assurance was everything—Her heart had told her this before—She had mentally acquitted Albert of all blame—He *could* not be to blame—He was so generous, so high-spirited—yet so sweet-tempered, and so clever . . . but it was an immense comfort to have her own persuasions thus confirmed.

She stopped not to say to herself that these were the words of a partial mother ;—she took the full comfort they were calculated to convey.

There was little sympathy between herself and Albert's sisters,—still she loved to be with them—She loved Drystoke—She loved Lady Faulconer, too—Lady Faulconer was so kind

—They were all, indeed so kind.—She was very glad that her mother had consented to the plan proposed.

She set out, her spirits subdued, rather than broken down. No danger was apprehended for Albert's life—He would get better, Eugene would get better—they should all be happy again.

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She arrived at Drystoke about eight o'clock in the evening. It was now the latter end of June—the weather was delicious, and Drystoke in all its exceeding beauty.

It stood at the termination of a gorge, which ran up a distant spur of that chain of hills which furnished Armidale with its mineral treasures. This gorge, or glen, as it would have been called in Scotland, widened suddenly about a quarter of a mile behind the house, which stood upon a pleasant elevation, the last rising ground, in fact, where the mountains fell into the plain beneath. This platform was disposed in charming walks and terraced flower gardens, with

fountains and canals, and dressed grounds and plantations,—and the rising ground behind, where the rocks, every here and there, broke through the surface, was covered with natural wood of great beauty ;—such beauty as belongs to those native woods of the more northern counties, where oak and holly, and mountain ash, and the willow and the birch, mingle together with a wildness so charming.

We, perhaps, miss there, the fine spreading beeches, the towering elms of the south ; but, for variety of tints, and for all the delights which the wild woods' fragrance affords, I think them unrivalled.

At a little distance from the house, the gorge, as I have said, suddenly narrowed into what was scarcely more than a fissure in the hills, broken with rocks and cloathed with all manner of underwood ; down it a pebbly stream, clear as crystal, murmured.

Haughton Hall was, in every respect, a very much nobler and finer place than Drystoke ; yet there was that in Drystoke, which

Imogene loved almost better. The wild beauty of the glen ; the charm of the terrace gardens ; the loveliness of the view, more confined than that of Haughton by the hills, which broke into the plain upon either side, seemed to please her better. It was altogether smaller, more domestic—more home-like.

Sir John Faulconer and his two daughters were in the drawing-room, when Imogene arrived.

The first sound which greeted her, was that of the piano-forte, upon which some one, after a brilliant prelude of scales, struck up a gay, spirit-stirring waltz. It sounded in strange contrast to her feelings. She was no great musician herself, certainly, but could she in any case, have borne to touch her piano-forte at such a time as this.

As the door opened, the music ceased, and Laura was the first to fly up to, and embrace her. “Good news,” she cried—“they are both better—It isn’t the measles, but Eugene is doing as well as possible.”

Charlotte came up to kiss her. Sir John Faulconer rose from his newspaper, threw it aside, and came forward with a pleasant greeting.

He almost started, as the sweet girl raised her eyes to meet his, her face kindling bright with pleasure, as he spoke. It was nearly a year since he had seen her. How charming she was become!—Not so regularly handsome, certainly, as Laura; but what an enchanting expression in her mouth and eyes.

Upon her side, she thought Sir John Faulconer altered—a thing most unusual for him—he looked really depressed and out of spirits.

“What will you have?” began Charlotte, as soon as the first reception was over; delighted to play the part of mistress of the house—“We have dined rather early, but you know Mrs. Jenkins is famous for her surprises.”

“Thank you, dear—I will wait till tea—I dined with Mamma, before I left Haughton—She is gone, as, perhaps, you know, to Eton.

But dear, dear Laura!—When had you the good news?”

“This morning’s post—a letter from Mamma. It’s the scarlet fever, Eugene has—but the worst is over, and he is going on as well as possible. Do you think,” she whispered, “I should have been at my piano-forte, if he hadn’t.”

Imogene pressed her hand.

“And Albert?”

The very mention of the name, brought a cloud over Sir John Faulconer’s face—but he chose to answer the half expressed question himself.

“He is better—and I expect they will leave Eton in a day or two. Change of air is recommended—his mother means to take him a little tour along the coast, and I hope he will return to us—much as usual.”

Imogene did not shake her head—but there was something in her countenance that expressed the same thing, and to it Sir John Faulconer responded, by saying—

“It is a most unfortunate affair, certainly—but Albert had nothing whatever to do with it, except, so far as being second to his friend—a part which no man, under his circumstances, could refuse. The treatment he has received, appears to me unjust in the extreme. But I hope he will show his sense of it, by the high spirited manner in which he takes it—His present depression is merely physical.”

And, having said thus much, he rose and left the room by the balcony which led to the flower garden; looking more disturbed and annoyed than he chose to confess; for, in truth, he was deeply and bitterly mortified.

His son, it is true, had not been disgracefully expelled, but the request to withdraw him, was mortifying enough.

It was a blight, it was a check in the career of a boy, of whom he was excessively and justly proud—proud, rather than fond, as a careless man of the world, looks upon a child of promise.

“I think papa’s a thousand times right,”



said Charlotte, when he was out of hearing—  
“but I don’t believe Albert will behave a bit as he wishes him—Albert has such a way of taking things—He makes such a fuss about what other people get over, I don’t know how.”

“But Mr. Hardress and he were such great friends.”

“Yes, to be sure—Eton friends—boys make such a to-do about friendships—School friendships! They never last—and I don’t believe Hardress was an amiable character at all.”

“But, surely, he must have had many good qualities, or your brother could not have loved him as he did.”

“I don’t believe, that sort of school-boy liking has much to do with what people call good qualities.”

“School-boy! but your brother is no school-boy, now.”

“True—He’s quite ready to go to the university, which, by the by, is lucky enough

—for he can go there almost directly, and that will cover up this Eton scrawl.”

Imogene was silent—she felt very much shocked—she had never thought Charlotte so unamiable.

Laura sat near, drawing through her fingers the silken ears of the spaniel upon her lap.

“How lucky, that Eugene had nothing to do with it,” she said.

“Yes,” said Charlotte, sharply — “some people have such luck—Imogene needn’t care about it ; *her*—what shall I call him—cousin—brother — well, her *Eugene* is safe—so I suppose she will not find it easy quite to understand all our vexation about Albert.”

Imogene coloured.

“Don’t be angry now,” said Charlotte.

“I am not angry.”

“Then why *do* you go so red—but it’s always so, when one speaks of Eugene,” and she laughed rather ill-naturedly. “Oh, not angry! only—only—well, I won’t tease you about

him, any more—but I sometimes wonder that you like him so much ; he is as handsome as an angel, to be sure—and wonderfully clever at some things—but he's so capricious, and passionate, and odd—I confess, I like people more in the common way — besides, he's two years younger than you are, I believe."

"That's an odd reason for not loving him," said Imogene, with a little laugh.

"He's just my age," put in Laura.

"What's that to the matter, Laura? You *have* the most extraordinary talent for speaking to the point," Charlotte said, ironically.

"Well—I may surely speak," was Laura's reply.

"Who hinders you?—but it would be best to try for a little sense when you *do* speak. Don't you think so, Imogene?"

"I see no want of sense in what she said," was Imogene's answer; and she looked at Laura, and felt pleased with her beauty, and a certain sweetness of expression, rather belied by her temper, which was defective, as the tempers of

the weak are apt to become under the dictation of the strong.

Imogene felt a love for Laura, because she knew that Laura sympathised in her affection for Eugene ;—but she wanted to hear more of Albert.

“ Do you think Lady Faulconer will come home soon ? ”

“ Oh ! who knows ? She’s going to trail that precious son of her’s along the south coast, I don’t know for how long or for how far.—Rather she than me ; for if there is a hateful task in the world, it’s the attending to those hip-ped, nervous people. Grandmamma—Mamma’s Mamma, I mean—is nervous ; you can’t imagine what a plague she is. Always this thing the matter, and that thing the matter, till one’s tired to death of her complaints—and then set a crying by the least thing. If Mamma says a word—if she only *looks* so as not to please her, the tears are in Grandma’s eyes, and she looks for all the world like a suffering saint. Saints are of all ages, you know ;—one can’t call an old lady a suffering angel, can one ? Oh ! I

do hope Albert's not going to take to such ways; but the very name of nervous fever makes one quite sick with fright."

"How oddly you do look, Imogene!"—suddenly turning to her—"Is that your look when you are really vexed? It's not pretty. What have I said or done now?"

"I am always very sorry for nervous people," said Imogene, gently, trying to keep down her anger, but feeling very hot;—"I believe they suffer dreadfully. Mr. Elmsley is nervous, and he is often very ill, indeed; when nobody but those who watch him and understand him, know that he is ill at all. I am afraid your poor Grandmamma suffers a great deal more than you are aware."

"She'd be a vast deal better if nobody put that into her head; but she's got a tiresome maid, who's always a flattering and a pitying of her."

"Shall we go into the garden," Imogene broke short the conversation by saying.—She hated this habit of criticising and finding fault

with everybody and everything, from her heart—but ‘such was the custom of Branksome Hall.’

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The way in which the family took Albert's misfortune, did not promise a very comfortable reception when he should return.

Anything like genuine sympathy with his feelings was evidently out of the question.

His father, Sir John Faulconer, soon recovered his usual levity. He had, by long indifference, so strengthened the gay carelessness of his spirits, that serious attention or deep feeling upon any occasion, however important, was, if excited at all, only momentary. A certain amount of vexation and displeasure he still felt, but anything like sympathy with the honest grief or the painful situation of his son was not to be thought of.

It was his principle, as far as possible, to

steer clear of every painful sensation. He looked upon life as a short dream at the best, and thought that the wisest thing a man could do with it, was to get as much enjoyment, and suffer as little pain during the transit as possible.

Squeeze the orange, before the worthless rind was thrown away.

His heart was not naturally hard—he was incapable of what, in common parlance, we call unfeeling actions. He was never intentionally unkind, far less cruel; but, had his breast been cold and indurated as the nether millstone, he could not have been more utterly without sympathy for feelings such as those of his unhappy son. He could be tolerant, indulgent, for he was good-natured and careless—but he showed that he considered Albert's sufferings, as the effect of a troublesome, though, perhaps, pardonable weakness, and left them to cure themselves in course of time, as they infallibly would, when the body strengthened.

As for the two girls, there was little to be

expected from them. Charlotte was worldly and heartless, impatient of grief, as a waste of time and obstruction of progress, in the way she desired. Laura was of a gentler nature, but so ill brought up, and of so feeble an understanding, that her consolation was little worth the having.

Imogene saw these things with grief and anxiety, and her desire that Albert should come home, before her departure, was extreme. She felt sure that she could find something to say that would comfort him; for she understood him better than the others did. Her compassion for him was unbounded. She thought his the most cruel of situations; and, though, after hearing the circumstances more in detail, she *could* not acquit him of all blame—this only increased her pity.

Well did she understand what a terrible addition to regret and sorrow for such a loss must be the slightest shadow of self-reproach.

A few days passed in this manner, and then



a letter came, and that very day, Albert and his mother were to return home.

Lady Faulconer wrote, that they should arrive by dinner time.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Hope, heav'n-born cherub, still appears,  
Howe'er misfortune seems to lower.

ANON.

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## INNOCENT IMOGENE !

She wondered that her heart fluttered so, and that her colour went and came, in such a strange manner, whilst Lady Faulconer's letter was being read.

The post-bag came in at breakfast-time. Sir John Faulconer read the passage, which communicated the intelligence, aloud. He was sitting at the end of the table, Charlotte making tea at the head of it. Laura and Imogene, one on each side of him.

So soon as Sir John had finished reading this part of the letter, he folded it with the brief comment of—

“Of course, you will have everything ready for them, Charlotte; but you may as well put off dinner half-an-hour, to-day. We will give them a little law,”—and, putting the letter into his pocket, he took up the newspaper once more. Charlotte was busy with her tea-cups, and a good deal hidden behind the tea-urn. There was no one to observe the treacherous countenance of Imogene but Laura; and Laura was playing with her teaspoon, and evidently thinking of something far away.

It was impossible for Imogene, in the hurry of her spirits, just then, to do more than gulp down a cup of tea.

“But you don’t take anything,” suddenly broke in Sir John, pushing a buttered roll towards her.

She took some upon her plate, and cut it about—longing for breakfast to be over, and to be able to run away.

At last, Sir John rose, and, giving a few more directions to Charlotte, left the room; and then, as was the usual consequence of his departure, tongues were unloosed, and the female *ramage* began.

“I declare! Papa is incomprehensible. He seemed very much vexed with Albert, and now he makes a greater fuss about getting ready for him than ever he did before—though he always seemed to think the rest of the household were only the ‘born thralls’ of his son.”

“He’s anxious about him, perhaps,” put in Laura;—“you know he has been so ill.”

“I wonder, if you or I had been as ill, if he’d have cared so much about us?—Not a bit of it. Men and sons are the oddest things—to see them together, you’d think they did not care an atom for each other; but, every now and then, it comes out—‘My father’ is to be everything—and ‘My son—my son, and heir’ to be worshipped by all the world, with psaltery, sackbut, harp, and all instru-

ments of music, like the golden image on the plain of Dura. It's no wonder Albert expects to have his own way in everything."

"I don't think he's *very* selfish," said Laura.

"No—I don't suppose he's what people would call *very* selfish. But he thinks very much and very highly of himself, and that, in my opinion, is almost as bad."

"But he's so handsome and so clever!—one can't wonder; and, though he is a little tyrannical, he's *very* good-natured," argued Laura.

Whilst Imogene felt her cheeks burning, and her eyes kindling, at what she thought the greatest injustice in the world—and in the ardour of that war which she carried on against wrong and injustice, in every shape in which it was possible to resist it, she would have joined her voice to strengthen the feeble half-and-half defence of Laura, but that a something—a consciousness—a bashfulness, came over her.

She felt ashamed of herself for sitting silent, whilst her friend, now under such heavy misfortunes, was thus attacked—but she really could not speak.

Charlotte looked at her, and laughed.

“What do you look so fierce for, Imogene?” she said—“I uttered nothing that was an offence to *you*, did I?”

“I don’t think you are fair to Albert,” she murmured, in a low voice.

“Oh! And that makes you so angry”—laughing again—“I beg your pardon—I was not aware I was committing an offence against *you*, when I ventured an opinion about *him*.”

“I don’t like injustice—and I think you were unjust.”

“As how? may it please you.”

“I don’t think Albert is conceited, or selfish.”

“Who uses hard terms now? Conceited! I vow I never uttered the word. Selfish! I said I wondered he was *not* selfish. But I never saw anything like you, Imogene—you

take up everything so. There is no pleasure in conversation, if one must always be weighing one's words, and if people can't understand the general scope of one's discourse, without all this preaching and explaining."

Imogene was silent—She had her own opinion as to Charlotte's style of conversation, but it was not her office to correct her—especially as a most thankless and utterly useless attempt, as she well knew, it would have been; besides, she was four years younger, which, at their period of life, makes an immense difference in dignity—thence, Charlotte, as a privilege of her superior years, assumed a tone, to which Imogene, in the humility of her youth, submitted uncomplainingly.

She was glad, however, to make her escape into the garden and shrubberies, and to the company of her own thoughts.

It was a lovely morning—promising a glorious, brilliant day—one of those days in which, with her passionate love of nature, she took intense delight;—some way, she had

grown into a habit of associating Albert especially with that delight.

It is some years now since I saw them together at Haughton; I believe they had not met very often since; but whenever they had, things had gone on in the old way. In spite of all Lady Faulconer's apparent precautions to keep them asunder, they were drawn, as if by an invisible attraction, towards each other. In the girlish innocence of her heart, Imogene looked upon Albert as a dear friend; the dearest and most delightful of friends. One who seemed by intuition to sympathise in every thought and feeling as it arose, almost before it was expressed.

A delicious day was not complete—something was ever wanting to its enjoyment, if Albert was not there to share it. All the plans for the amelioration of her people's condition—in which, under the tuition of Mr. Glenroy, she took such extreme interest—were confided to him with the unembarrassed confidence of a young heart that dreamed



not of passion—and thought only of affection such as angels might have felt.

But with him, it was already different. He carefully concealed, however, every indication of sentiments stronger and less reasonable than hers. He felt an intuitive dread of disturbing the innocent flow of her feelings.

Owing to various circumstances, it was at this time nearly a year since they had met. With what passionate longings Albert had looked forward to his return home; he had confided to no one—not even to Hardress. The more delicate sensibilities of the man had succeeded to the undisguised admiration of the school-boy. He had begun to regard his love as a hidden treasure—too sweet for any eye but his own.

He was not aware of the change that had taken place in her appearance. She had grown up insensibly to her full height—had assumed the woman's dress, and been introduced, as far as the little introduction of appearing in her mother's drawing-room went, and

going in with her and the rest of the company to dinner—when, as rarely happened, there was any company.

But she thought so little of herself, that these changes had been almost unheeded. She still continued, in her old childish way, to sit upon the corner of Mr. Glenroy's chair, and delight the old man's heart, with the same gay and innocent prattle.

Every year, as it passed on, had added to her interest in the great objects of her life, as set before her by Mr. Glenroy ;—and he had taken care to increase, with the advance of time, her power of spontaneous action. He had begun, indeed, gradually to withdraw his interference, and to leave the painful part of what was to be done to herself, aided by Mr. Elmsley, who was established as a sort of prime minister to the young sovereign of Armidale.—But all this had come on so gradually, that she was scarcely aware of the difference.

Life fled by, busy and happy. The good understanding between Eugene and herself in-

creased every year ;—and, assisted by the observations of Mr. Elmsley, she began to understand, and to find excuse for the wayward character of Genius—that dangerous gift, when not united with a strong sense and power of reason above that of ordinary men.

She became indulgent and tolerant—rare virtues at her age !—to variations of temper, which she could not understand. She learned to estimate his peculiar and dangerous situation,—without parent, or even friend, justly entitled to exercise authority where it was so greatly needed ; and, spoiled as he was by Lady Emma, who, seeming to dread the idea of reproving or contradicting him, yielded to his will and wishes in every way.

Eugene, too, it must be confessed, had become more amiable. As they both grew older, the tyrannical and exacting child had softened into the more reasonable, though still passionate, boy ; and the envy and jealousy of his earlier years had been corrected, or, at all events, was shown only by the affectation of a

total want of interest in Imogene's pursuits and plans.

And now the fair creature, her bonnet untied, and thrown carelessly over her head, her muslin scarf hanging round her with a negligence such as would have been very symptomatic of danger in Rosalind's opinion, is wandering through the shrubberies and down the path which leads to the little glen,—for she loved that little glen, and its murmuring rivulet, sparkling over the pebble-stones, and the quiet little path, meandering up and down among the trees, and between the rocks, and to see the pyramids of fox-glove flowers breaking out from among the stones and mosses;—and the *Fumaria* hanging its delicate tendrils over fallen trunks and broken branches;—and to hear the stock-dove cooing, and the blackbird bursting forth into song from the brake;—or watch the wild hawk slowly soaring in the narrow strips of blue sky over head.

These things she loved dearly, and the more dearly, because the glen seemed all her own.—

None of the party frequented it but herself —Neither Charlotte nor Laura, country girls born and bred as they were, seemed to have the least taste for the beauties of nature.

And so she wandered, and thought of Albert, as they had last parted, and of his affectionate shake of the hand,—and his head turned back from the box of his mother's carriage, as she, with Lady Emma and Eugene, remained upon the hall steps, watching them as they went away.

How gay and bright, and joyous, he had been during that visit!

The Celestial Archer!—Yes, Lenham had taught her that pretty appellation, which suited him so well. For, was he not, with his light figure, his bright, sunny hair, and that ardent, animated glance of his, like the Apollo, whose figure, she so often looked at, guiding the car of day amid the dancing hours.

And now how would he be?

Poor fellow!—Poor boy!

For he was still boy to her.

She spent the morning wandering by herself, and did not come in to luncheon; but she kept watching the sun, thinking it would never begin to go down, looking at her watch, and wondering if dressing time would ever come.

At last she heard the welcome half-hour bell ringing, and hastened home.

Her heart was beating, as she crossed the carriage road, and anxiously looked for the mark of recent wheels, but no carriage had been up that day.

They were not arrived, then. It was a sort of relief, and a sort of disappointment—but up stairs to her room she went.

Her maid had laid several dresses out upon the bed, from which to make her choice. Gay colours, or gaily trimmed with pretty flowers—all simple, but all as youth at her age, should be—light and bright.

A kind of instinct within, made her desire a soberer dress that day.

“There is my *gris de lin* tarlatan” she said, “somewhere, is there not?”

“Yes, Miss Aubrey, I brought it—but I did not lay it out. It’s not a pretty dress—dull, *I* think.”

“Shew it me . . . .”

“Yes; I will wear that to-day, please—and do my hair quite plain—don’t put anything into it.”

“I’ve got such a sweet moss rose and bud—I begged it of the gardener to-day—Do let me put that in your hair, Miss Aubrey—It will help off this *gris de lin*, which is very flat, and don’t, to my mind, become you, Miss Aubrey, at all.”

“Does it not?” and she hesitated a little, and looked again at the dress. Then after a moment’s reflection, “Put it on.—It suits the colour of to-day,” thought she.

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They were all assembled in the drawing-room.

Charlotte and Laura, the one in a bright pink, the other in a straw-coloured dress,

looking very gay, and forming a strong contrast to Imogene, in her modest *gris de lin*—which, however, was extremely ladylike and delicate, and very far from being unbecoming, as her long glass, I must confess considerably to her satisfaction, had assured her, before she left her room.

The two girls exclaimed as she entered—

“Why, Imogene! what’s the matter?—You look as if you had suddenly put on half-mourning—Is the kitten—or is Beau deceased?”

Imogene smiled faintly, and coloured faintly.

“I felt in the humour for it, I believe—I am sorry you don’t like it.”

“Oh! it’s very pretty, and monstrously becoming,” said Laura.

“Shall we keep dinner back any longer, sir?” asked the tall footman, who now entered the room.

Sir John was standing with his face to the window, which commanded a view of the approach.



“No. Stay. I hear a carriage. Let dinner be sent up. Your mistress will be here before it is on the table.”

The carriage was heard approaching.

Imogene’s heart beat so fast that she felt almost sick.

“Are you ill, dear?” whispered Laura.

“Oh, no!—it’s nothing—nothing,” was all she could get out.

END OF VOL. II.

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